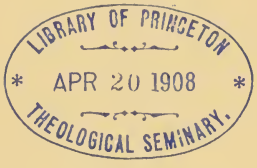

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BY

WASHINGTON GLADDEN

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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PREFACE

"THE time is come," said a New Testament prophet, "for judgment to begin at the house of God." Perhaps that time ought never to pass, but if, in any measure, the criticism of the church has of late been suspended, it is certainly reopened now, in good earnest. Nor is this criticism confined to outsiders; the church is forced to listen in these days to caustic censures from those who speak from within the fold.

That such self-criticism is needed these chapters will not deny. That the church is passing through a critical period must be conceded. But the way of life is not obscure, and it seems almost absurd to indulge the fear that the church, which has been providentially guided through so many centuries, will fail to find it.

These pages have been written in the firm belief that the Christian church has its great work still before it, and that it only needs to free itself from its entanglements and gird itself for its testimony to become the light of

the world. Something of what it needs to do to make ready for this great future, this little book tries to show.

Through all this study the thought has constantly returned to the young men and women to whom the future of the church is committed; and while the book is most likely first to fall into the hands of their pastors and teachers, the author hopes that ways will be found of conveying its message to those by whom, in the end, its truth will be made effective.

W. G.

First Congregational Church,
Columbus, Ohio, December 17, 1907.

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THE CHURCH AND MODERN LIFE

I

THE ROOTS OF RELIGION

The church with which we are to deal in the pages which follow is the Christian church in the United States, comprising the entire body of Christian disciples who are organized into religious societies, and are engaged in Christian work and worship.

This church is not all included in one organization; it is made up of many different sects and denominations, some of which have very little fellowship with the rest. Among these groups are some who claim that their particular organizations are the true and only churches; that the others have no right to the name. Such is the claim of the Roman Catholic church and of the High Church Episcopalians. Their use of the word church would confine it to those of their own communions. Others would apply the term more broadly to all who *profess and call* themselves

Christians, and who are united in promoting the teachings and principles of the Christian religion.

The church, as thus defined, has no uniform and authoritative creed, and no ruling officers or assemblies who have a right to speak for it; it is difficult, therefore, to make any definite statements about it. It is possible, nevertheless, to think of all these variously organized groups of people as belonging to one body. In some very important matters they are united. They all believe in one God, the Father Almighty; they all bear the name of Christ; they all acknowledge him as Lord and Leader; they all accept the Bible as containing the truth which they profess to teach. The things in which they agree are, indeed, far more important than the things in which they differ, and it is our custom often to speak of this entire body of Christian disciples as "the church," forgetting their differences and emphasizing their essential unity. This is the meaning which will be given to "the church" in these discussions.

The church is concerned with religion. As the interest of the state is politics, of the bank finance, of the school education, so the interest

of the church is religion. Religion organizes the church, and the church promotes religion.

Religion is a fact of the first magnitude. We sometimes hear ministers complaining that the people do not give it so much attention as they ought, but we shall find it true in all countries and in all the centuries that it is one of the main interests of human life. There are few subjects, probably there is no other subject, to which the human race has given so much thought as to the subject of religion. The greatest buildings which have been erected on this planet were for the service of religion; more books have been written about it than about any other theme; a large part of the world's art has had a religious impulse; many, alas! of the most destructive wars of history have been prompted by it; it has laid the foundations of great nations, our own among them, and has given form and direction to every great civilization under the sun.

It is not a churchman, or a theologian, it is Mr. John Fiske, one of the foremost scientific investigators, who has said of religion: "None can deny that it is the largest and most ubiquitous fact connected with the existence of mankind upon the earth." [1]

[1] *Through Nature to God*, p. 189.

About the size of the fact there is no disputing, but how shall we explain it? Where did it come from?

The scientific people have puzzled their heads not a little over the question where the life on this planet came from. They cannot make up their minds to say that it came from non-living matter; and some of them have ventured a guess that the first germs might have been brought by a meteorite from some distant planet. That, however, only pushes the mystery one step further back: how did it come to be on that distant planet?

The origin of religion has furnished a similar puzzle to these investigators. There are those among them who assume that religion is an invention of crafty men who find it a means of obtaining ascendency over their fellows. That it is all imposture — the product of priestcraft — is the theory of some small philosophers. Such being the case, they expect that the progress of knowledge will cause it to disappear.

To others it seems probable that religious ideas may have originated in the phenomena of dreams. In the visions of the night those who have passed out of life reappear; this gives

room for the belief that they are still in existence, and suggests that there may be another world whose inhabitants exert an important influence over the affairs of this world. According to this ghost theory, religion is all an illusion.

Such crude explanations are, however, not much credited in these days by thoughtful men. It is easy to see that the foundations of religion are deeply laid in human nature. Aristotle told a great truth, many centuries ago, when he said that man is a political animal. That is to say, there is a political instinct in him which causes him to organize political societies and make laws; he is a state builder in the same way that the beaver is a dam builder, or the oriole is a nest builder, or the bee is a comb builder.

With equal truth we may say that man is a religious animal. The impulse that causes him to worship, to trust, to pray, is as much a part of his constitution as is the homing instinct of the pigeon. This natural instinct is, however, reinforced by the operation of his reason. Feeling is deeper than thought; we are moved by many impulses before we frame any theories. But the normal human being sooner or

later begins to try to explain things; his reason begins to work upon the objects that he sees and the feelings that he experiences. And it is not long before something like what Charbonnel describes must take place in every human soul: —

"Every man has within him a sense of utter dependence. His mind is irresistibly preoccupied by the idea of a Power, lost in the immensity of time and space, which, from the depths of some dark mystery, governs the world. This power, at first, seems to him to manifest itself in the phenomena of nature, whose grandeur surpasses the power or even the comprehension of mankind." [1]

Toward this unknown power, or powers, his thought reaches out, and he begins to try to explain it or them. He forms all kinds of crude and fantastic theories about these invisible forces. At first he is apt to think that there are a great many of them; it is long before he clearly understands that there can be but One Supreme. The moral quality of the being or beings whom he thus conceives is not clearly discerned by him; he is apt to think them fickle, jealous, revengeful, and cruel;

[1] *The Victory of the Will*, p. 213.

most often he ascribes to them his own frailties and passions.

In some such way as this, then, religion begins. It is the response of the human nature to impressions made upon the mind and heart of man by the universe in which he lives. These impressions are not illusions, they are realities. All men experience them. Something is here in the world about us which appeals to our feelings and awakens our intellects. Being made as we are, we cannot escape this influence. It awes us, it fills us with wonder and fear and desire.

Then we try to explain it to ourselves, and in the beginning we frame a great many very imperfect explanations. Sometimes we imagine that this power is located in some tree or rock or river; sometimes it is an animal; sometimes it is supposed to exist in invisible spirits or demons; sometimes the sky or the ocean represents it, or one of the elements, like fire, is conceived to be its manifestation; sometimes the greater planets are the objects of reverence; sometimes imaginary deities are conceived and images of wood or stone are carved by which their attributes are symbolized.

These religious conceptions of the primitive

races seem to us, now, as we look back upon them from the larger light of the present day, to be grotesque and unworthy; we wonder that men could ever have entertained such notions of deity, and we are sometimes inclined, because of these crudities, to dismiss the whole subject of religion as but a farrago of superstitions. But these imperfect conceptions do not discredit religion; they are rather witnesses to its reality. You might as well say that the speculations and experiments of the old alchemists prove that there is no truth in chemistry; or that the guesses of the astrologers throw doubt on the science of astronomy. The alchemists and the astrologers were searching blindly for truth which they did not find, but the truth was there; the fetish worshipers and the magicians and the idolaters were also, as Paul said, seeking after the unknown God. But they were not mistaken in the principal object of their search; what they sought was there, and the pathetic story of the long quest for God is a proof of the truth of Paul's saying, that God has made men and placed them in the world "that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us." It

was not a delusion, it was a tremendous reality that they were dealing with. The fact that they but dimly conceived it does not lessen the greatness of the reality.

Not many intelligent thinkers in these days doubt the reality and the permanence of religion. Herbert Spencer did not profess to be a Christian believer; by many persons he was supposed to be an enemy of the Christian religion; yet no man has more strongly asserted the permanency and indestructibility of religion. As to the notion that religions are the product of human craft and selfishness, he says: "A candid examination of the evidence quite negatives the doctrine maintained by some that creeds are priestly inventions."[1] And again: "An unbiased consideration of its general aspects forces us to conclude that religion, everywhere present as a weft running through the warp of human history, expresses some eternal fact."[2] And again: "In Religion let us recognize the high merit that from the beginning it has dimly discerned the ultimate verity and has never ceased to insist upon it. . . . For its essentially valid belief, Religion has constantly done battle. Gross as were the

[1] *First Principles*, p. 14. [2] *Ibid.* p. 20.

disguises under which it at first espoused this belief, and cherishing this belief, though it still is, under disfiguring vestments, it has never ceased to maintain and defend it. It has everywhere established and propagated one or other modification of the doctrine that all things are manifestations of a power that transcends our knowledge." [1]

That religion is, in John Fiske's strong phrase, an "everlasting reality" is a fact which few respectable thinkers in these days would venture to call in question. But, as we have seen, this reality takes upon itself a great variety of forms. Looking over the world to-day, we discover many kinds of religion. Religious ideas, religious rites and ceremonies, religious customs and practices, as we gather them up and compare them, constitute a variegated collection.

Professor William James has a thick volume entitled "The Varieties of Religious Experience," in which he brings together a vast array of the documents which describe the religious feelings and impulses of persons in all lands and all ages. It is not a study of creeds or philosophies of religion, it is a study

[1] *First Principles*, pp. 99, 100.

of personal religious experiences; of the fears, hopes, desires, contritions, joys, and aspirations of men and women of all lands and ages, as they have been dealing with the fact of religion.

Not only do we find many different kinds of religion existing side by side upon this planet; we also find that each of these types has been undergoing constant changes in the course of the centuries. To trace the religious development of any people from the earliest period to the present day is a most instructive study.

Take our own religion. Christianity is not an independent form of faith. Its roots run down into the Hebrew religion, whose record is in the Old Testament; and the Hebrew religion grew out of the old Semitic faiths, and these again sprang from the ancient Babylonian religions or grew alongside of them. So we are compelled to go far back for the origin of many of our own religious ideas. Jesus did not claim to be the Founder of a new religion; he claimed only to bring a better interpretation of the religion of his people. He said that he came not to destroy but to fulfill the law and the prophets. The New Testament religion is

a development of the Old Testament religion. It is a wonderful growth. When we go back to the old monuments and the old documents and trace the progress of religious beliefs and practices from the earliest days to our own, we learn many things which are well worth knowing.

The central fact of religious progress is improvement in the conception of the character of God. As the ages go by, men gradually come to think better thoughts about God. Little by little the old crude and savage notions of deity drop out of their minds, and they learn to think of him as just and faithful and kind.

The Bible shows us many signs of this progress. The earlier stories about God give him a far different character from that which appears in the later prophets. It was believed by the earlier Hebrews that God desired to have them put to death all the inhabitants of the land of Canaan when they took possession of it; and when they put to the sword not only the armed men of the land, but the women and the little children, they supposed that they were obeying the command of God. They learned better than that, after a while.

When Abraham started with Isaac for

Mount Moriah, he undoubtedly thought that he should please God by putting to death his own well-beloved son; but before he had done the dreadful deed the revelation came to him that that was a terrible mistake; he saw that God was not pleased by human sacrifices. That was a great day in the history of religion. Because of that experience, Abraham was able to make his descendants believe the truth that had been given to him, and from that time onward human sacrifices probably ceased among the Hebrews. A long step had been taken toward the purification of the idea of God of one of its most degrading elements.

This superstition lingered long in other faiths; probably it survived among our own ancestors after Abraham's day. Tennyson's poem, "The Victim," is a vivid picture of human sacrifice among the Teutonic peoples:—

"A plague upon the people fell,
A famine after laid them low;
Then thorpe and byre arose in fire,
For on them brake the sudden foe;
So thick they died the people cried,
'The Gods are moved against the land.'
The priest in horror about his altar
To Thor and Odin lifted a hand:
'Help us from famine
And plague and strife!

What would you have of us?
Human life?
Were it our nearest,
Were it our dearest, —
Answer, O answer! —
We give you his life.'"

The Gods seemed to say that the victim must be either the king's wife or the king's child; which it should be, was the terrible question that the king had to answer. The choice seemed to have fallen on the child, but the wife would not have it that he was the king's dearest, and she rushed to her own immolation. The poem reflects the common notion of those dark days, that the angry Gods could only be propitiated by the slaughter of those whom men loved the best. From this horrible idea the Jewish people were delivered by the insight of their great ancestor.

Dark notions about God still lingered among them, however, and the Old Testament record shows us how they slowly disappeared. Moses and Samuel were good men for their time, but the God whom they worshiped was a very different being from the God of Hosea or of the later Isaiah.

This development of the idea of God has

been going on in modern times. It is not long since devout men were in the habit of saying that God's displeasure with the wickedness of cities was exhibited in the scourges of cholera and scarlet fever in which multitudes of little children were the victims. Not two hundred years ago the great majority of our Puritan ancestors were believing in a God who, for the sin of Adam, was sending millions of infants, every year, to the regions of darkness and despair. The God of Cotton Mather or of Edward Payson could hardly have lived in the same heaven with the God of Dwight Moody or Phillips Brooks.

The changes which have been taking place in our ideas about God have been mainly in the direction of a purified ethical conception of his character. We have been learning to believe, more and more, in the justice, the righteousness, the goodness of God. In the oldest times men thought him cruel and revengeful; then they began to regard him as willful and arbitrary — his justice was his determination to have his own way; his sovereignty was his egoistic purpose to do everything for his own glory. We have gradually grown away from all that, and are able now to believe what Abra-

ham believed, that the Judge of all the earth will do right.

In the presence of a God who, I am assured, is a being of perfect righteousness, who never blames any one for what he cannot help, who never expects of any one more than he has the power to render, who means that I shall know that his treatment of me is in perfect accord with my own deepest intuition of truth and fairness and honor, I can stand up and be a man. My faith will not be the cringing submission of a slave to an absolute despot, but the willing and joyful acceptance by a free man of righteous authority.

Now it is certain that the belief of the Christian church respecting the character of God has been steadily changing, in this direction, through the Christian centuries. Enlightened Christians have been coming to believe, more and more, in a good God; and by a good God I mean not merely a good-natured God, but a just God, a true God, a fair God, a righteous God. The growth of this conviction has been purging theology of many crude and revolting dogmas.

It is a great deliverance which is wrought out for us when we are set free, in our religious

thinking, from the bondage of unmoral conceptions, and are encouraged to believe that God is good. It is a great blessing to have a God to worship whom we can thoroughly respect. A tremendous strain is put upon the moral nature when men are required, by traditional influences, to pay adoration and homage to a being whose conduct, as it is represented to them, is, in some important respects, conduct which they cannot approve. All the religions, through the imperfection of human thought, have put that burden on their worshipers.

Christianity has been struggling, through all the centuries, to free itself from unworthy conceptions of the character of its Deity, and each succeeding re-statement of its doctrines removes some stain which our dim vision and halting logic had left upon his name.

What, now, has caused these changes to take place in men's thoughts about God? What influences have been at work to clarify their ideas of the unknown Reality?

From three principal sources have come the streams of light by which our religious conceptions have been purified.

The first of these is the natural world round

about us. We are immersed in Nature; it touches us on every side; it addresses us through all our senses; it speaks to us every day with a thousand voices. Nature is the great teacher of the human race. She knows everything; she waits to impart her love to all who will receive it; she is very patient; her lessons are not forced upon unwilling pupils, but whosoever will may come and take of her treasure. Longfellow said of the childhood of Agassiz, that —

"Nature, the old nurse, took
The child upon her knee,
Saying: 'Here is a story-book
Thy Father has written for thee.

"'Come, wander with me,' she said,
'Into regions yet untrod;
And read what is still unread
In the manuscripts of God.'"

It is not the child Agassiz alone whom Nature thus invited; to the whole human race, in its childhood, its adolescence, its maturity, she has always been saying the same thing. She has been seeking, through all the ages, to disclose to us all the mysteries of this marvelous universe. We have been slow learners; it took her a great many centuries to get the simplest truths lodged in the human mind.

The cave-dweller, the savage in his teepee, were able to receive but little of what she had to give. Yet before their eyes, every day, she spread all her wonders; with infinite patience she waited for the unfolding of their powers. All the marvels of steam, of electricity, of the camera, of the telescope, the microscope, the spectroscope, the Roentgen rays, — all the facts and forces with which science deals were there, in the hand of Mother Nature, waiting to be imparted to her child from the day when he first stood upright and faced the stars.

Slowly he has been led on into a larger understanding of this wonderful universe. And what has he learned under this tuition? What are some of the great truths which have gradually impressed themselves upon his mind?

He has been made sure, for one thing, that this is a universe; that all its forces are coherent; that the same laws are in operation in every part of it. The principles of mathematics are everywhere applicable; gravitation controls all the worlds and every particle of matter in every one of them, and the spectroscope assures us that the same chemical elements which constitute our world are found in the farthest star. "On every hand," says Walker,

"we are assured that the guiding principle of Science is that of the uniformity of nature."

It has also come to be understood that nature is all intelligible. Everything can be explained. This is the fundamental assumption of science. Many things have not yet been explained, but there is an explanation for everything; of that every thinker feels perfectly sure. "Fifty years ago," says Sir John Lubbock, "the Book of Nature was like some richly illuminated missal, written in an unknown tongue; of the true meaning little was known to us; indeed we scarcely realized that there was a meaning to decipher. Now glimpses of the truth are gradually revealing themselves; we perceive that there is a reason — and in many cases we know what that reason is — for every difference in form, in size, and in color, for every bone and feather, almost for every hair." [1]

This is the latest word of the latest philosophy; there is a reason for everything. As Romanes says, Nature is instinct with reason; "tap her where you will, reason oozes out at every pore."

If all things are rational and intelligible,

[1] Quoted by Walker in *Christian Theism*, p. 47.

then all things must be the product of a rational Intelligence. That conclusion seems inevitable.

But we can go further than this. It is not merely true that we can find in the world about us the signs of an Intelligence like our own, it is also true that our own intelligence has been developed by the revelation to us of this Intelligence in the world about us. "If," says Walker, "human reason is but 'the reflection in us of the universe outside of us,' then, clearly, the Reason was there, expressed in the universe, before it possibly could be reflected in us. It is *our relation to the Universe that makes us rational.*" And again, "Apart from the Reason expressed in the Universe around him, man could never have become the rational being that he is."[1]

This, then, is the first great reason why our religion has gradually become more rational. The rationality of the universe constantly presented to our thought has developed a rationality in our thoughts about the universe. The mind, like the dyer's hand, is subdued to what it works in. The response of primitive man to the pressure of Nature upon him was a re-

[1] *Christian Theism*, pp. 40, 42.

sponse of wonder and awe and fear; his religion was instructive, emotional; but through the long tuition of the ages, the old nurse has taught him how to use his reason; and he now finds unity where he once found strife, and order and law where once confusion and chaos reigned. His religion has become rational.

But what do we mean when we say that man's great teacher has been Nature? Nature, as we have seen, is instinct with Reason, and the Reason which is revealed in Nature is only another name for God. It is the immanent God, the Eternal Reason, who has been patiently disclosing himself to us in the world round about us, and thus cleansing our minds from the crude and superstitious conceptions with which in our ignorance and fear we had invested him.

The second of the sources from which the influences have come for the purification of religion is humanity itself.

We are told, in the Book of Genesis, that man is made in the image of God; and the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, on which the entire teaching of Jesus rests, is but a stronger statement of the same truth. It is

true that we find human nature, as yet, for the most part, in very crude conditions; its divine qualities are not clearly seen. It does not yet appear what we shall be. But we have learned, in our evolutionary studies, that no living thing ought to be judged in the earlier stages of its development; we must wait to see the perfected type before we can make up our minds about it. The eaglet just hatched does not give us the right idea of the eagle, nor does the infant in his swaddling clothes reveal to us the man. So it is with species and races; if they are undergoing a process of development, we must wait for the later stages of the process before we judge. The apple is not the crab, but the Northern Spy; the horse is not the mustang, but the Percheron or the German roadster. In estimating any living thing, you take into consideration its possibilities of development; the ideal to which it may attain must always be in sight.

In the same way when we think of man, we do not take the Patagonian as the type, but the best specimens of European or American manhood.

If, then, we are taught to believe that man is a child of God, we should be compelled to

believe that it is the most perfectly developed man who most resembles God. We have some conception of the ideal man. Our conceptions are not always correct, but they are constantly improved, as we strive to realize them. And in the ideal man we see reflected the character of God. We are sure that a perfect humanity would give us the best revelation we could have of divinity. If we could see a perfect man, we could learn from him more about God than from any other source.

Most of us believe that a perfect Man appeared in this world nineteen hundred years ago; and the best that we know about God we have learned from him. More has been done by his life and teachings to purify religion of its crudities and superstitions than by all other agencies. The worst of the crudities and superstitions that still linger in our own religion are due to the fact that the people who bear his name only in part accept his teachings and very imperfectly follow his example. If we could all believe what he has told us and do what he has bidden us, our religion would soon be cleansed from its worst defilements.

The manifestation of the life of God in

Jesus Christ we call The Incarnation; and it was a manifestation so much more perfect than any other that the world has seen, that we do well to put the definite article before the word. Yet it is a mistake to overlook the fact that God dwells in every good man, and manifests himself through him. And whenever, in any character, the great qualities of truth and justice and purity and courage and honor and kindness are exhibited, we see some reflection of the character of God.

In many a home the father and the mother, by their faithfulness and kindness and self-sacrifice, make it easy for the children to believe in a good God; and in every community brave and true and saintly men and women are revealing to us high qualities which we cannot help interpreting as divine. We cannot imagine that God is less just or fair or kind than these men and women are; they lift up our ideals of goodness, and they compel us to think better thoughts of him in whom all our ideals are united.

Thus it is that our humanity, as glorified by the Word made flesh, and as lifted up and sanctified by the lives of good men and women, has been a great teacher of pure reli-

gion. We have learned what to think about God and how to worship him aright by what he has shown us in the living epistles of his goodness and grace which he has sent into the world, and, above all, in that "strong Son of God" whom we call our Master.

The other source from which the influences have come by which religion has been purified, is that divine Spirit who is always in the world, and always waiting upon the threshold of every man's thought, and in the sub-conscious depths of every man's feeling, to enlighten our understanding and purify our desires. To every man he gives all that he can receive of light and power. To many his gifts are but meagre, because their capacities are small and their receptivity is limited; but there are always in the world open minds and docile tempers, to whom he imparts his larger gifts. Thus we have the order of prophets and inspired men, whose words are full of light and leading. In the Bible we have a record of the messages given by such men to the world. In that teaching, rightly interpreted, there is great power to correct the errors and cleanse away the delusions and superstitions which are apt to gather about our religion. We cannot

estimate too highly the work that has been done by these sacred writings in purifying our conception of God.

It is possible, however, to treat this book in a manner so hard and literalistic that it shall become a hindrance rather than a help to the better knowledge of God. The one fact that it brings vividly before us is that fact of progress in religious knowledge which we are now considering. It shows us how men have gone steadily forward, under the leadership of the divine Spirit, leaving old conceptions behind them, and rising to larger and larger understanding of divine things. Any treatment of the Book which fails to recognize this fact — which puts all parts of the Bible on the same level of spiritual value and authority — simply ignores the central truth of the Bible and perverts its whole meaning.

The truth which we need to emphasize in our use of the Bible is the truth that the same Spirit who gave the men of the olden time their message is with us, to help us to the right understanding of it, and to give us the message for our time. Nor is his illumination confined to any guild or rank of believers;

the day foretold by the prophet has surely come, when the Spirit is poured upon all flesh, and the prophetic gift may be received by all the pure in heart.

The one glorious fact of our religion — a fact but dimly realized as yet by the church — is the constant presence in the world of the Spirit of Truth. If there is anything at all in religion, this divine Spirit is ready to be the Counselor, Comforter, and Guide of every human soul. And we cannot doubt that the steadily enlarging conception of the character of God is due to his gracious ministry.

Such, then, are the sources from which have come that better knowledge of God which makes the religion of our time to differ from the religion of past generations. And it will be seen that these three sources are but one. It is the divine Reason and Love himself who has been revealing himself to us in the unity and order of nature, in the enlarging life of humanity, in the inspired insights and convictions of devout believers. What we are looking upon is that continuing revelation of God to the world which has been in progress from the beginning, and which will never

cease until the world is full of the knowledge of God as the sea is full of water.

With this great and growing revelation the church is intrusted. Its business in the world is to take this truth about God, this new truth, this larger and fairer truth, which God himself, in the creation and through the incarnation and by the Indwelling Spirit, has been clearing up and lifting into the light, and fill modern life full of it. This is the truth which modern life needs. Religion is a permanent fact, but its forms change with advancing knowledge. There are forms of truth which are suited to the needs of modern life. God himself is always at work preparing the truth for present needs. It is the function of the church to understand this truth, and make it known in every generation.

II

OUR RELIGION AND OTHER RELIGIONS

Our religion is the Christian religion. This is the form of faith which the church in our country is organized to promote. Ours is a Christian country.

This is not by virtue of any legal establishment of Christianity, for one of the glories of our civilization is that first amendment to our national constitution, which declares that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Buddhists, Hindus, Mohammedans, Parsees, Jews, are just as free to exercise their respective forms of religion in this country as are the Christians. The government neither forbids nor fosters any kind of faith.

Ours is a Christian country because nearly all the people of the country are, by birth and by choice, identified with the Christian faith.

Still it is true that the freedom extended by our constitution to other forms of faith

has been claimed by some of their adherents, and we have in the United States a goodly number of groups representing non-Christian creeds. Of these the Jews constitute much the largest number, there being, perhaps, six or seven hundred Jewish congregations in all parts of the country. There are also sixty or seventy Chinese temples, a few groups of Parsees and Mohammedans, a few hundred companies of Spiritualists, and a few scores of societies of Ethical Culture and Free Religion. All told there are not, probably, among the eighty millions of our people, more than a million and a half who are not either traditionally or nominally Christians.

Our contact with the Orient, on our western frontier, is likely, however, to bring us into close relations, in the near future, with other ancient forms of faith. The Christian church in modern life will be compelled to meet questions raised by the presence of Buddhists and Confucians and Mohammedans, and to prove its superiority to these religions. The study of comparative religion has had hitherto purely an academic interest for most of us; in the present century it is likely to become for millions a practical question. Many a

young man and young woman will be forced to ask: "Why is the religion of my fathers a better religion than that of my Hindu associate or my Japanese classmate?" The answer, if wisely given, may be entirely satisfactory, but the question must not be treated as absurd or irrelevant. In the face of the great competitions into which it must enter, our religion must be ready to give an intelligent account of itself.

One of the first questions to be asked when we take up this inquiry is, What is the attitude of our religion toward the other religions? Perhaps it is better to put the question in a concrete form and ask, What is the attitude of the Christian people toward the people of other religions?

The answer to this question may not be as prompt and confident as we could wish. Many people who profess and call themselves Christians are not so broad-minded or so generous hearted as they ought to be, and they are inclined to be partisans in religion as well as in art or politics; they think that all the truth and all the goodness are in the institutions with which they are allied, and that all the rest are of the evil one. But such people are

not good representatives of Christianity. They never learned any such judgment from him whom they call their Master. And we may safely claim that those who have the mind of Christ are tolerant and generous toward those whose opinions or whose religious practices differ from their own. They do not forget that their Master treated with the greatest sympathy men and women whose faiths greatly differed from his own; that some of those who received his strongest testimonies to the greatness of their faith, like the Roman centurion and the Canaanitish woman, were pagans; that one of his most intimate and gracious conversations on the deep things of the Spirit was with a Samaritan woman, and that his representative hero of practical religion was a Samaritan man whose genuine goodness he placed in sharp contrast with the heathen selfishness of the priest and the Levite of his own faith. No Christian ever learned to be a bigot by sitting at the feet of Jesus Christ. And I think we may justly claim that those who have entered into the spirit of the Christian religion are always generous in their attitude toward those who worship by other forms of faith.

They cannot forget that all these people whose creeds and rites differ so greatly from their own are children of our Father, and that they can be no less dear to him than we are; and it is therefore hardly possible for them to imagine that he can have left them without some revelation of saving truth. They approach, therefore, the religious beliefs of other peoples with open minds, expecting to find in them elements of truth, and desiring to put themselves into sympathetic and cordial relations with those whose opinions differ from their own.

As has been said, not all those who are known as Christians have this tolerant temper, because there are many who are known as Christians who have but dim notions of what it means to be a Christian. It was once the prevailing assumption that all religions were divided into two classes, the true and the false; that ours was the true religion and all the others were false religions. That the heathen were the enemies of God was the common belief, and it was a grave heresy to insinuate that any of them could be saved without renouncing their false religions and accepting the true religion. This was the basis upon

which the work of foreign missions was long conducted, and there are still many who bear the Christian name who have not yet reached any other conception.

But the church in modern life is learning to see this whole matter in a different light. Our best modern missionaries decline to take this attitude in dealing with men of other religions. They do not regard the heathen as outside the pale of the divine compassion; they seek for points of sympathy between their own beliefs and those of the people to whom they are sent. From no other sources have come stronger testimonies to the sympathy of religions. We must not, these veteran missionaries insist, assume that our religion is the only true religion, while all the others are false religions. We may well assume that all human forms of faith are more or less imperfect — our own as well as theirs, and invite them to a candid comparison of the differing systems. If our own is really superior, if it meets universal human needs more perfectly, we ought not to fear such a candid comparison. But we must be ready to see and approve the good that is theirs, if we wish them to accept the good that is ours.

This is not admitting that there is no difference — that one religion is as good as another; we should stultify ourselves by making any such admission. But it is a willingness to recognize truth and goodness everywhere, and to rejoice in them. And we must show that we are not afraid to take from the many truth which has been revealed to them more clearly than to us. If we believe in the universal fatherhood and the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit, we must expect to find, in every form of faith, some elements that our Christianity needs. In fact Christianity, through all its history, has been appropriating truth which it has found in the systems with which it has come in contact, and it is one of the glories of Christianity that it has the power to do this.

A great Christian scholar has just published a book entitled "The Growth of Christianity," in which he shows how this has been done. He finds that "just as Jewish morality was ennobled and beautified by the teaching of Christ and yet made an essential element of that teaching, so the philosophy of Greece, the mysticism of Asia, and the civic virtues of Rome were taken up by the Christian religion, which, while remaining Christian, was modi-

fied by their influence. This process cannot fairly be called degeneration, but growth, such growth and development as is the privilege of every truly living institution." [1]

It is true, as one critic suggests, that in taking in these foreign elements Christianity not only made some important gains, but also suffered some serious losses. Greek philosophy and Asian mysticism and Roman legalism are responsible for certain perversions of Christianity, as well as for enlargement of its content. We have great need to be careful in these assimilations; some kinds of food are rich but not easily digested. But it is, as I have said, a chief glory of Christianity that it possesses this assimilative power. It is the natural fruit of faith in the divine fatherhood. We ought to be able to believe that God has some revelations to make to us through our brethren in other lands, as well as to them through us. It is the possession of this power which fits Christianity to be the universal religion.

It has already given some striking proofs of the possession of this power. We have had, once, upon this planet, a great Parliament of Religions, in which the representatives of all

[1] New York *Independent*, September 12, 1907.

the great faiths now existing in the world were gathered together for comparison of beliefs and experiences. It was, perhaps, the most important religious gathering which has ever assembled. The presiding officer, in his opening address, thus described its import: —

"If this congress shall faithfully execute the duties with which it has been charged, it will become a joy of the whole earth and stand in human history like a new Mount Zion crowned with glory and making the actual beginning of a new epoch of brotherhood and peace.

"In this congress the word 'religion' means the love and worship of God and the love and service of man. We believe the Scripture 'Of a truth God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him.' We come together in mutual confidence and respect, without the least surrender or compromise of anything which we respectively believe to be truth or duty, with the hope that mutual acquaintance and a free and sincere interchange of views on the great questions of eternal life and human conduct will be mutually beneficial.

"The religious faiths of the world have most seriously misunderstood and misjudged each other, from the use of words in meanings radically different from those which they were intended to bear, and from a disregard of the distinctions between appearances and facts, between signs and symbols and the things signified and represented. Such errors it is hoped that this congress will do much to correct and to render hereafter impossible."

Such was the purpose of this parliament, such the spirit which prompted the calling of it, and found utterance in its conferences. It was surely a notable and beautiful thing for the adherents of these dissimilar faiths, whose ordinary attitude toward one another has always been suspicious and oppugnant, to come together in this friendly way, seeking a better understanding, and emphasizing the things that make for unity. And whose was this parliament? Which religion was it that conceived of it, and made provision for it, and set in motion the influences that drew these hostile bands into harmony? It was the Christian religion which gave us this great endeavor after unity. And it is highly improbable that such a movement would have originated in

any other than a Christian country, or among the followers of any other Leader than the Man of Nazareth. It was the natural thing for the disciples of Jesus to do; and while many men of the other faiths yielded to this gracious influence, and were thus brought under the power of the bond that unites our common humanity, it is not likely that any of them would have taken the initiative in such an undertaking.

We may hope that this is not the last parliament of religions; that in the days before us such manifestations of the unity of the race will not be uncommon. And we are sure that the leaders of all such endeavors will be found among the followers of the Prince of Peace.

Here, then, we find one clear answer to the question with which we started. The Christian confessor who is confronted with the question "What reason have you for thinking that the religion of your fathers is better than any other form of faith?" may answer, first, "It is better because it cares more for the unity of the race than any other religion cares; because it believes more strongly in the essential brotherhood of all worshipers; because it

teaches a larger charity for men of differing beliefs, and more perfectly realizes the sympathy of religions. It is far from being all that it ought to be, on this side of its development; many of its adherents are still full of bigotry and intolerance and Pharisaic conceit; but these are contrary to its plainest teachings, and all its progress is in the direction of larger charity for men of all religions. Already, in spite of its failures, it has shown far more of this temper than any other religion has exhibited; and when it gets rid of its own sects and schisms, and comes closer to the heart of its own Master, it will have a power of drawing the peoples together which no other religion has ever thought of exercising."

I have spoken of the fact that Christianity claims to be a universal religion. That was the expectation with which its first messengers were sent forth. They were bidden to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. There has never been any other thought among the loyal followers of Jesus than that the day is coming when every knee shall bow to him and every tongue confess him.

This expectation of universality is not shared

by all the religions of the earth. Many of them are purely ethnic faiths; they grow out of the lives of the peoples who adhere to them; it does not seem to be supposed that any other peoples would care for them or know what to do with them. The old Romans had a saying, "*Cujus regio, ejus religio*" — which means, Every country has its own religion. The earlier Hebrews had the same idea; they thought that every people had a god of its own. Jehovah was their God; Baal was the god of the Phœnicians, and Chemosh was the god of Moab. They believed that Jehovah was a stronger God than any of these other deities, but they did not seem to doubt their existence or their potency. Even the prophet Micah says: "For all the peoples will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of Jehovah our God for ever and ever." [1] The later prophets gained the larger conception of universality; they believed that there was but one supreme God, and therefore but one religion, to the acceptance of which all mankind would at last be brought.

The narrower conception of religion as a national or racial interest has, however, pre-

[1] Micah iv, 5.

vailed and still prevails among many peoples. The Hindu religion, which numbers many millions of votaries, has no expectation of becoming a world religion. Indeed, it could not well entertain any such expectation; the system of caste, on which it rests, makes it necessarily exclusive. It has no missionary impulse; its adherents are content with a good which they do not seek to share with other peoples. The same thing is true of many of the minor faiths.

Now it is manifest that religions which do not expect to be universal are not likely to exceed their own expectations. "According to your faith be it unto you" is as true of systems as of men. And none of us is likely to be strongly drawn to a faith which has really no invitation for us, no matter how stoutly it may maintain its own superiority. No religion which has only a tribal or racial significance can make any effective appeal to our credence. The note of universality must be struck by any religion which claims our suffrages.

There are certain great living religions which make this claim of universality. Judaism and Parseeism have both entertained this expectation, but the fewness of their adherents at the present time indicates that the expecta-

tion is but feebly held. The three living faiths which aspire to universal dominion are Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity.[1] Each of these hopes to possess the earth. Each of these is strong enough to enforce its claim with some measure of confidence.

Recent estimates give to Buddhism 148,000,000 of followers, to Mohammedanism 177,000,000, and to Christianity 477,000,000. Mohammedanism has been rapidly extending its sway in Africa during recent years; Buddhism is not, probably, making great gains at the present time.

If any form of religion is to become universal in the earth it would appear that it must be one of these three. If any of us wishes to exchange the religion of his fathers for another faith, his choice will be apt to lie between Buddhism and Mohammedanism. What claims to our credence and allegiance could either of them set up?

It would not, for most of us, be an easy thing to turn from the faith of our fathers to

[1] I do not include Confucianism, because it is, primarily, a system of ethics or sociology rather than a religion; and also because it seems to have no missionary impulse, and no expectation of universality.

any other form of faith. The ideas and usages to which we have been accustomed all our lives are not readily exchanged for those which are wholly unfamiliar. Rites and ceremonies and customs of other religions, which may be intrinsically as reasonable and reverent as our own, strike upon our minds unpleasantly because they are unwonted. It would, therefore, be somewhat difficult for us to put ourselves into a mental attitude before either of these great religions, in which we should be able to do full justice to its claims upon our credence.

Yet if we could gain the breadth of view to which the disciples of Christ ought to attain, we should be compelled to admit that each of these great religions has rendered some important service to mankind.

What those services have been can only be hinted at in this chapter. Of Islamism, Bishop Boyd Carpenter testifies that it "has been, and still is, a great power in the world. There is much in it that is calculated to purify and elevate mankind at a certain stage of history. It has the power of redeeming the slaves of a degraded polytheism from their low groveling conception of God to conceptions which are

higher; it has set an example of sobriety to the world and has shielded its followers from the drink plague which destroys the strength of nations. And, in so far as it has done this, it has performed a work which entitles it to the attention of man and no doubt has been a factor in God's education of the world."[1]

Of Buddhism even more could be said. In the words of Mr. Brace: —

"Sometime in the sixth century before Christ there appeared in Northern India one of those great personalities who in a measure draw their inspiration directly from above. . . . When he says, 'As a mother at the risk of her life watcheth over the life of her child, her only child, so also let every one cultivate a boundless good-will towards all beings, . . . above and below and across, unobstructed, without hatred, without enmity, standing, walking, sitting, or lying, as long as he be awake let him devote himself to this state of mind; this way of living, they say, is the best in this world' — when these words come to our ears we hear something of a like voice to that which said, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden.' From a thousand

[1] *Permanent Elements in Religion*, p. 143.

legends and narratives we may gather that to Gotama the Enlightened (the Buddha) the barriers of human selfishness fell away. To him the miseries of the poor, the slave, the outcast, were his own; the tears which men had shed from the beginning, 'enough to fill oceans,' were as if falling from his eyes. The great pang of sorrow, piercing the heart of the race, inconsolable, unspeakable, struck to his own heart. For him the sin of the world, the unsatisfied desire, the fierce passion and hatred and lust, poisoned life, and he cared for nothing except for what would change the heart and remove this fearful mass of evil."[1]

The character of Gotama as it emerges from the reek of tradition is one of the noblest in history, and while the religion of which he was the leader has been defiled by all manner of corruptions and superstitions, it has borne much good fruit in the life of many peoples.

It would be easy to point out the radical defects in both these religions; let me rather call attention to some of the distinguishing peculiarities of our own faith.

1. The God whom Jesus has taught us to believe in, is a far nobler object of affection

[1] *The Unknown God*, p. 228.

and trust than is ever presented to the thought of the followers of Mohammed or of Gotama. He is our Heavenly Father, infinite in his purity, his truth, his kindness, his compassion, his care for all his children.

Now it is true that the central and fundamental difference in religions is that which concerns the character of the deity. The best religion is that which worships the best god. And when we compare the Christian conception of God with the Buddhist conception or the Mohammedan conception, we cannot fail to see which is the highest and the purest.

A brilliant Japanese scholar, discussing this subject of the relative values of religions, was asked if, in any respect, the Christian religion was better than the Oriental religions, and he promptly answered: "Yes; the Christian conception of God as the Heavenly Father is higher and better than that of any Oriental religion." If that is true it settles the whole question.

It is, perhaps, inaccurate to speak of Buddhism as having any conception of God. "The very idea of a god as creating or in any way ruling the world," says one authority, "is utterly absent in the Buddhist system. God is

not so much as denied, he is simply not known." Buddha taught men to be compassionate to one another, but he did not teach them to look above themselves for any divine compassion. It is true that they now venerate him, and even pray to him; for the human soul will pray, — its instinct of dependence, its craving for fellowship with something higher than itself will prevail over all theories; but this prayer must be somewhat incoherent, for the worshiper believes that Buddha has no longer any conscious or personal existence. And there is certainly no conception in his mind of any such fatherly relation with any Power above himself, who loves him and cares for him and knows how to help him, as that which Jesus has revealed to us.

The Mohammedan Deity is indeed a person, but he is a relentless, omnipotent Will. The worst phases of the old Calvinism — those which have disappeared from Christian thought — are the central ideas of the Mohammedan creed. God is represented in the Koran as fitful and revengeful, as arbitrary and despotic; he is a very different being from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The religion of Jesus emphasizes, as no

other religion has done, "the redemptive principle in its idea of God." It does not hide the fact of moral evil as the source of all our woes, but it shows an eternal purpose in the heart of God to save man from sin, even at the cost of suffering to himself. This is the meaning of redemption; it is the salvation of men through a divine self-sacrifice. No such revelation of the love of God as this has ever been made to the world, except through the life and teachings and death of Jesus Christ. No wonder that when it is simply and clearly presented to men it wins their hearts. A Chinese woman, listening to a recital of this redemptive work of God, turned suddenly to her neighbor and said, "Did n't I tell you that there ought to be a God like that?"

We shall look in vain through the scriptures of the other religions for any such conception of the relation of God to men. Men must save themselves by their own endeavors; they must obey or they will suffer; perchance by their own suffering they may be purified: but that God should stoop to earth and stand by the side of sinning and suffering man, and save him by suffering with him, is a truth to which none of them has risen.

3. Christianity, above all other faiths, is the religion of hope. It not only kindles in our hearts the hope of overcoming the sin which is our worst enemy, but it conquers in our hearts the fear of death and opens up to us the prospect of unending and glorious future life, in the society of those most dear to us.

Mohammedanism also permits us to hope for future blessedness, albeit its representations of the life to come are not always such as to purify and elevate our thoughts. Buddhism, on the contrary, though it tells us that we may be reborn many times, assures us that each reappearance in this world will be attended with suffering and struggle; from which, if we continue to walk in the true path, striving more and more to conquer our desires, we may at length hope to be delivered; but the blessedness which comes at the end of all this struggle is simply forgetfulness: we shall lose our identity and be remerged in that fount of Being from which at first we came. Existence is the primal evil: to get rid of ourselves is what we are to strive for; salvation is our disappearance out of life, our absorption in the ocean of unconsciousness. This is the best that Buddhism has to offer us. Not many of

us, I dare say, will wish to exchange for this the Christian hope.

There are many other characteristics of the Christian faith on which it would be interesting to reflect, but these three great elements are sufficient to enable us to form our judgment as to its comparative value. No religion which in these particulars is inferior can ever draw the world away from the leadership of Jesus Christ. And it ought to be clear to all who can comprehend the needs of human nature that while these other faiths, in view of the great services they have rendered to mankind, are not to be despised; and while it is probable that the world, until the end of it, will be indebted to them for contributions which they have made to our knowledge of the highest things; yet there is no good reason why any one who has been walking in the light that shines from the life and teachings of Jesus Christ should wish to turn from his way into the ways of Mohammed or Gotama.

It is not by any happy accident that Christianity is growing far more rapidly than any other form of faith, and now vastly outnumbers every other; it is not a strange thing that the

lands in which it prevails are far more prosperous and far more powerful than the lands in which other religions prevail. It is winning the world. It is winning the world because its interpretation of life is a truer interpretation than any other religion has offered; because it meets and supplies the deepest wants of men more perfectly than any other religion meets and supplies them.

The great evolutionary law is at work here, as everywhere. There is a struggle for existence among religions, as among all other forms of life. The law of variation has had full play in all this realm; human nature has produced a great variety of religious ideas and forms, and natural selection is doing its work upon them. The fittest will survive. And the fittest religion will be the religion that ministers most perfectly to human needs; that makes the best and strongest men and women; that rears up the most fruitful and the most enduring civilization.

Everything visible within the horizon of our thought to-day indicates that the religion which will survive — the permanent religion, the universal religion — will be the Christian religion.

It will gather into itself the best elements out of every other form of faith, but the constructive ideas will be those which have found most perfect expression in the teachings of Jesus Christ.

III

THE SOCIAL SIDE OF RELIGION

We have found in our previous studies that religion is a central and permanent element in human nature, and that Christianity bids fair to be the permanent form of religion.

But the readers of these pages are constantly meeting with those who would admit both these statements, yet who are disposed to deny or ignore the value of the church in modern society. They believe in religion, they say; they even believe in the principles of Christianity; they may go so far as to say that they believe in Christ; but they do not believe in the church. What they seem to object to is organized religion. They appear to think that it ought to be diffused, somehow, like an atmosphere, through the community. We hear Christians talk, sometimes, about "the invisible church;" that is the only kind of church which these objectors are disposed to tolerate. *Institutional* religion is the special object of their distrust.

Some of the more radical among them oppose religious organizations, not because these organizations are religious, but because they have an antipathy for all forms of social organization. It does not take an open-eyed onlooker long to discover that social organizations of all kinds are infested with many evils. Social machinery is never perfect in its construction or operation. It is always getting out of gear; there is endless friction and clatter and confusion; it takes a great deal of trouble to keep it moving, and its product is often of poor quality. When men get together and try to coöperate for any purpose, by orderly methods, they are always sure, because of the imperfection of human nature, to do a certain amount of mischief. Often their organization tends to tyranny; freedom is unduly restricted; selfish men get possession of the power accumulated in the organization, and use it for their own aggrandizement; it becomes, to a greater or less extent, an instrument of oppression. Thus government, which is normally the organization of political society for the protection of liberty and the promotion of the general welfare, sometimes becomes, as in Russia, a grinding despotism despoiling the

many for the enrichment of the few. Thus, in our American politics, we have the machine, which is simply the perversion of party organization, and which in many instances has become, under the manipulation of greedy and conscienceless men, an evil of vast proportions.

Looking upon these abuses with which political organizations of all kinds are always encumbered, some men propose to abolish all forms of political organization. This is anarchism, of which there are two varieties, — the anarchism of violence, and the anarchism of non-resistance. Czolgosz represents one type and Tolstoy the other. For the anarchism of violence we can have only detestation and horror; to the anarchism which expects to abolish laws by ignoring them and suffering the consequences, we must extend a respectful toleration. Nevertheless the anarchism of Tolstoy offers us a programme which is hardly thinkable. For we are made to live and work together; and if we work together effectively we must have rules and working agreements, methods of coöperation, and these, whatever name we may give them, will have the force of constitutions and laws. The great coöperations,

on which the welfare of society depends, involve social organization. Even if the form which this takes should be largely economic, it would have political force and significance. Man is a political animal; it is his nature to live politically; and, as Horace says, you may drive out nature with a pitchfork, but she is sure to come back. And the same weaknesses of human nature which infested the old forms of organization would be found in the new ones, unless human nature itself were regenerated.

Those who would destroy political society on account of its abuses are, therefore, guilty of the same foolishness as that of the man who burned his house to get rid of the rats. Doubtless the rats all escaped and were ready to enter, with reinforcements, into the new house as soon as it was builded.

The same reasoning applies to ecclesiastical anarchism. Those who, because of the defects of church organizations, would abolish the churches, are equally unpractical. For it is not only true, as we saw in our first chapter, that religion is a primal fact of human nature, it is equally true that religion everywhere has a social manifestation. The same impulse

which moves men to worship, draws them together in their worship.

Any deep or strong emotion makes human beings congregate. Just as a flock of sheep huddle together when they are frightened, so men, when deeply moved for any cause, seek one another. As the impulse of religion is one of those by which men are most deeply moved, it always brings them together.

So long as religion keeps the form of fear it produces this result; when fear is succeeded by more grateful emotions, and men begin to have some sense of the goodness of the Power they have been blindly worshiping, then their gladness and gratitude bring them together. Religion, therefore, in all lands and ages, has been a social interest; indeed, it has been the strongest of the bonds uniting human beings. To demand a religion which should have no social expression is to fly in the face of nature, and forbid causes to bring forth their normal effects. Wherever there is religion men will be associated, and their worship and their work will be carried on under forms of social organization. Anarchism is no more thinkable or workable in religion than in politics.

If this is true of religion in general, it is

eminently true of the Christian religion. The characteristic note of Christianity is its emphasis on the social relations. In this it simply exhibits what we may call its scientific temper, its tendency to keep close to the facts of life, to give the right interpretation to nature and to human nature.

A modern sociologist [1] tells us that "the sole point of view, aim and goal of Jesus, in all his teaching and by implication of all his acts, was social. The divine Father whom he proclaimed was social — a Being whose one attribute was love." When we say that "God is love," this is what we mean. He delights in companionship, and finds his happiness in the relations which unite him with his creatures. Since his own supreme good is in these reciprocal affections and services, we cannot imagine that he could expect us to find our good in any different way. If we share our Father's nature, we must seek our happiness where he finds his. The blessedness of life must therefore be in our social relations. Such is the teaching of Jesus. Such is the essence of Christianity.

While, therefore, every religion by its very nature tends to bring men together, Christ-

[1] Professor D. M. Fisk.

ianity lifts the social impulse into the light and sanctifies and transfigures it, making it not merely a concomitant of religion but the heart of religion. The effect of this revelation was seen in all the ministry of Jesus. Wherever he went the people flocked together. "Great multitudes followed him." Into the wildernesses, up to the mountain tops, across the stormy lake, they made their way; it was a day of great congregations. It was because they wanted to be with him, of course; but when they came to him they came together, and one of the things he sought for them was that they should like to be together. That was surely a lesson that they learned of him; for as soon as he had gone they began to gravitate together. Every day they met, sometimes in the temple courts, sometimes in their own homes, for praise and prayer; every evening they partook together, in little groups, of a simple meal, in memory of him. Their religion, from the start, manifested a marked social tendency. Indeed, we might give it a stronger word, and say that, in the beginning, it was socialistic; it seemed to threaten a complete reconstruction of the industrial order. For "all that believed were together, and had all things common;

and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, as every man had need." [1]

Just how far this communistic experiment was carried it is difficult to say, but it is evident that the disciples felt that their religion ought to permeate and control their entire social life. And there has never since been a day when the social side of religion has not been recognized and provided for. The very impulse which is kindled in their hearts when they are brought into association with Christ, brings men together. Communion, fellowship, these are the first words they learn. It has been so from the beginning. One of the great Christians of the apostolic age admonished his converts against "forsaking the assembling of themselves together," and that admonition has always been heeded. No other religion has brought people together so constantly and in so many ways as Christianity has done. Christian people are always getting together, to pray together, to sing together, to partake together of the sacraments, to listen together to the teaching of the pulpit, to study the Bible together, to take counsel together about their work, to unite their efforts, in manifold

[1] Acts ii, 44, 45.

coöperations, for the upbuilding of the Kingdom. They have even come to believe — and they are profoundly right about it — that it is a good thing for people to come together just for the sake of being together, even when no distinctly religious business assembles them. To establish and promote pleasant and amicable social relations between human beings is a Christian thing to do. It is a sign of the progress of the Kingdom, and a preparation for it, when men and women enjoy meeting one another for no other reason than that they like to be together. It is a condition of the manifestation of the love which is the fulfilling of all law. The stranger, as many languages testify, is apt to be the enemy. The chief reason why he is dreaded and hated is that he is not known. Acquaintance allays suspicion and promotes sympathy and kindness.

Not the least of the services which Christianity has rendered to the world may be seen in what it has accomplished in bringing human beings together socially. Setting aside its purely religious function, it has done, in Europe and America, more than all other agencies put together to promote acquaintances and neighborly relations among men. It

has done, as we shall see by and by, far less than it ought to have done in this direction; its failures in this department of its work have been manifold and grievous; but after all this is admitted, it must still be affirmed that it has done most of what has been done to socialize mankind, and no other institution or agency is entitled to throw stones at it because of its deficiencies.

When, therefore, those who read these chapters hear the criticisms and cavils to which I referred at the beginning, they will know how to reply to them.

When they hear an argument which assumes that the church is worse than useless because all social institutions are worse than useless, they may answer that the reasoning is unsound, because it repudiates the deepest facts of human nature; that social institutions, the church among them, are natural growths as truly as the cornfields and the forests.

When they hear any one maintaining that he believes in the principles of Christianity but not in the social organizations which embody these principles, they may well reply that the principles of Christianity naturally and inevitably embody themselves in forms of

social organization; that you could no more prevent it than you could prevent light from breaking into color or spring from coming in May; that, as a matter of history, the growth of Christianity has been signalized by a marvelous development of the social sentiments and habitudes which must find expression in some kind of social coöperation; and that, as a matter of fact, after all necessary deductions have been made, the church has been a powerful agency in developing that temper of likemindedness which makes civilized society possible.

There is still another cavil to which it may be needful to refer. It is based on the notion that religion, after all, is a purely individual affair; that it concerns only the relations between the soul and its God; that therefore public worship is not only needless but unseemly. Prayer is sometimes described as "the flight of one alone to the only One;" and it is sometimes contended that any other than private prayer is a violation of all the higher sanctities. If this were true, of course the church would be an anomaly or an imposition. And while there are not many who would urge this argument unfalteringly, some such notion

as this may be found lying at the bottom of a good many minds.

The words of Jesus, in the sixth chapter of Matthew, are sometimes quoted in support of this criticism upon public worship: "And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee."[1]

But we must learn to interpret the words of Jesus as meeting the occasion on which they were spoken; and before we base any generalizations or rules of conduct upon them, we must bring together all that he said and did which bears upon the case in hand, and try to arrive at some meaning which shall include and explain it all. When we treat the utterances and acts of Jesus after this manner, we shall find that no such deduction as that which we are considering can be drawn from them.

[1] Matt. vi. 5, 6.

We discover, in the first place, that he himself did not always pray in secret; for several of his prayers made in public places are reported for us. Moreover, he told his disciples that when even two or three of them were gathered together in his name, he would be in the midst of them. The implication is that they would be in the habit of gathering together in his name, and that there would generally be many more than two or three of them.

The only form of prayer which he has left us is manifestly intended primarily, not for secret worship, but for social worship. The pronouns of the "Lord's Prayer" are all in the plural number: "*Our* father who art in heaven;" "Give *us* this day our daily bread." For solitary prayer these phrases are not suitable.

When he went away from his disciples he left them a great promise of the manifestation to them of that Spirit which had been given without measure to him; and he bade them tarry in Jerusalem until that promise should be fulfilled. Accordingly they assembled, about one hundred and twenty of them, in an upper room in Jerusalem, and "continued

steadfastly" in prayer together for many days. The response to this prayer was that outpouring of the Spirit by which the apostolic church was inspired, and equipped for its work. Saint Peter told the disciples that this was the gift of the ascended Christ, — the fulfillment of his promise to them. If this was true, it can hardly be conceived that he disapproved of the common prayer in answer to which this gift had come.

Nor can any reasonable interpreter of his words and deeds imagine that he intended his admonition in the sixth chapter of Matthew to be taken as a prohibition of public worship or of social prayer. Those words were simply a reproof of ostentation in worship. The Pharisees, whose conduct he is castigating, "loved to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they might be seen of men." It was a private and personal prayer, offered in a public place, to advertise the devotion of the worshiper. With our private and personal prayers the public has no concern ; it is a manifest indelicacy to thrust them before the public ; the place for them is the secret chamber. Individual sins and sorrows and needs we all have, and when we

talk with our Father about them we ought to be alone with him; but we have also common sins and sorrows and needs, and it is well for us to be together when we talk with him about them. It is therefore a gross perversion of these words of Jesus to quote them in condemnation of acts of public worship. His entire life and the example of all those who were nearest to him, as well as the testimony of the best Christians in all the ages, unite to render such a notion incredible.

If I have succeeded in answering the cavils which seek to discredit the church as a social organization, and especially as an agency for the maintenance of social worship, let me go on to suggest some positive reasons for the existence of such an agency.

Such an opportunity as the church offers for social worship is essential to the maintenance of religion. Religious feeling the expression of which was confined to the relations between the individual and his God, would become self-centred, egoistic, and morbid. If there were no praying but secret praying, if the social element were eliminated from prayer and praise, faith would take on ascetic forms, devotion would become rancid, sympathy would

be smothered, and the character of the worshiper would be hardened and belittled. There is a place and a time, as we have seen, for private devotion; probably many of us make far less use of it than would be good for us; but any attempt to shut our religion into the closet would be suicidal. It would mould there. To keep it fresh and wholesome it must be taken out into the light and air; the winds of heaven must blow through it; our desires must mingle with the desires of others; our voices must join with their voices; we must learn to think of the needs, the struggles, the sorrows, the hopes that are common to us all, to put ourselves in other people's places when we pray, to feel that our religion is a bond that binds us to our kind.

There is a kind of prayer which we could only use in the closet, — intimate, personal, dealing with matters of which no one else has any right to know. But there is another kind of prayer for which there is no other place than the great congregation; a prayer in which many pleading hearts unite; in which the sympathies and hopes and aspirations of a thousand worshipers are blended. Such a prayer, if some one can give it voice, is something far

higher and diviner than ever ascended from any secret shrine.

It is true that the prayer of the great assembly does not always find a fitting voice. It is sometimes arid and formal; it is sometimes palpably insincere and perfunctory, alas for our human disabilities and infirmities! The power of the leader to forget himself, to gather up into his heart the common needs of those who are listening, and pour them out before God, is sometimes wanting. Not seldom we may find ourselves wishing for those forms of prayer, sanctified by centuries of use, in which the Christian church, in all the lands of earth, has made known its requests to God. These are always dignified and reverent; every truly devout heart may find utterance for some of its deepest needs in the petitions of the Book of Common Prayer. But most of us have heard prayers in the sanctuary which lifted and kindled us as no written prayers could ever do. If the leader of the devotions could be "in the Spirit on the Lord's day;" if he could forget himself; if the simplicity which is in Christ could take possession of his thought, if he could look over the company round about him before he closed his eyes, and with a swift

glance could glean out of that field of human experience some inkling of the trials, the perplexities, the griefs, the struggles, the tragedies of the lives there before him, and with a great, fervent, energizing[1] prayer could carry them all up to God, there would be something in that which would convince all who were listening that the highest form of prayer is not secret prayer, but social prayer. Nor is it an uncommon thing to hear, even in humble pulpits, prayer which effectually meets this great demand.

It goes without saying that, for the highest forms of praise, we must have the conspiring voices of the great congregation. We cannot let loose the hallelujahs in the closet; that would be almost as unseemly as to pray on the street corner. If the Bible is any guide as to the forms which our worship should take, praise must constitute a large part of it. And praise is mainly a social act.

Even the preaching gathers much of its impressiveness from the congregation. The message which stirs the hearts of five hundred worshipers would make much less impression upon any one of them if he heard it alone.

[1] James v, 16.

It could not be given to him alone, as it is given to the five hundred; that is a psychological impossibility. There is something in it when the five hundred hear it that is not in it when the single auditor hears it, and that something is, far and away, the best thing that it contains.

All these considerations show that public worship is essential to the vigorous maintenance of true religion. The elements which it supplies to religion are vital elements. Let no man imagine that by reading the Bible and good books at home, and by worshiping in his closet, or, as some are fond of saying, "in God's first temples," the life of religion can be successfully maintained. It never has been maintained in that way, and it never will be. When men forsake the assembling of themselves together for worship, there is no more reading the Bible and good books at home, and no more praying in the closet, much less in the woods. Single individuals might, if the religious atmosphere of the community were kept vital round about them, continue to enjoy religion. Invalids are often forced to deprive themselves of social worship; but if they are there in spirit, something of the benefit finds them.

But a community which deliberately abandoned social worship would be a community in which no private worship would long be maintained.

If, then, we agree that religion is an essential element in the life of mankind, we must see that it is necessary that some institution should exist which shall make provision for social and public worship. The Christian church undertakes primarily to fulfill this function. It has other large and important relations to society, of which we shall speak further on. But this is its first concern. I hope that it has been made evident in this discussion that it is a very important function. I hope that those who read these pages may be able to see that if we are to have any religion in our land, the kind of work which the church undertakes to do cannot be neglected. That the church is not doing this work as well as it ought to be done is true enough; we shall have all that before us presently; but the vital necessity of the work is not therefore disproved. The work would be better done if those who now hold aloof, because they see its defects, would put their lives into the business of mending them.

There are very few men and women, after

all, in our modern society, who do not say, without hesitation, that we must have churches; that it would not do to let them die; that they are essential to the social welfare; that, imperfect as they are, they supply a need which every one can recognize. They have no hesitation, either, in admitting that if there are to be churches, somebody must belong to them, and share the responsibility for their maintenance. But when the question is asked, "If somebody must, why must not you?" a good many of them are not able to give a very clear answer. Very often the excuse that is set up is some form of theological dissent. But that is not, in many cases, a serious barrier. It might shut some men out of some churches; but there are great varieties of creeds, and the conditions of membership in some churches are so simple that no really earnest man is likely to feel himself excluded. If it is essential that the work of the church be done, and if the reader of these pages has not convinced himself that he is exempt from the common human obligations, then he can find, if he is in earnest, some church with which he can conscientiously ally himself, and in whose work he can bear a part.

IV

THE BUSINESS OF THE CHURCH

We have seen that religion is a social fact; that religious feeling creates social organizations, and is preserved and promoted by them. God is love, and love is social attraction; the children of God, who are made in his image, must find in their hearts a tendency to get together and worship and work together.

We find here a reciprocating action. An apple seed produces a tree which in its turn produces apples with seeds. So the religious impulse organizes the church, and the church cultivates and propagates religious impulses. The point to be emphasized is that religion, and especially the Christian religion, is inseparable from social forms; that its natural result is to bring human beings together in coöperative groups.

It is the business of life to organize matter; there is no life without organization; the inorganic is the lifeless. These are facts which should be borne in mind by those who approve

of the religious life but object to religious organizations. If religion is life, it will create organic forms.

In our last chapter we showed how worship, in its highest expression, is essentially social, and how impossible it would be to maintain it without the aid of institutions having the same essential purpose as the Christian church. Let us turn our thought now to the other great function of the church, the regeneration of human society.

Religion cannot be kept alive without alliance with the social forces; the social forces cannot be kept in healthful operation without the aid of religion. Neither blade of a pair of shears will cut without the other. You cannot raise corn without seed, and you can only get seed from corn.

Religion is not an ultimate fact. When men are religious just for the sake of being religious, their religion is good for nothing. Religion is for character. Its end is gained when it has made us good men and women. Religion is for service. It finds its justification in the work that it can do in making a better world of this. Jesus gave us the truth about it when he said, "The Sabbath was made for

man and not man for the Sabbath." And he carried the truth forward to a larger application when he said, "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world."

"*To save the world.*" That was the errand of the Christ; that is the business of his church. It is not merely to save a certain number of people out of the world, and to get them safely away to another world; it is to save the world.

There is no danger of giving to this phrase too wide an application. We are entitled to the expectation that this salvation is to have a large scope; that it is to include the earth and all its tribes of life. When we speak of making a better world of this, we ought to mean the physical world as well as the social world and the moral world. It is a true insight of faith which makes the poet say: —

"The world we live in wholly is redeemed;
Not man alone, but all that man holds dear:
His orchards and his maize: forget me not
And heartsease in his garden, and the wild
Aerial blossoms of the untamed wood,
That make its savagery so homelike; all
Have felt Christ's sweet love watering their roots:
His sacrifice has won both earth and heaven.
Nature in all its fullness is the Lord's.
There are no Gentile oaks, no Pagan pines;

The grass beneath our feet is Christian grass ;
The wayside weed is sacred unto him.
Have we not groaned together, herbs and men,
Struggling through stifling earth-weights unto light,
Earnestly longing to be clothed upon
With one high possibility of bloom ?
And He, He is the Light, He is the Sun
That draws us out of darkness, and transmits
The noisome earth-damp into Heaven's own breath,
And shapes our matted roots, we know not how,
Into fresh leaves, and strong, fruit-bearing stems ;
Yea, makes us stand, on some consummate day,
Abloom in white transfiguration robes."

This vital sympathy between man and his environment is never lost sight of by the great prophets. The redemption of man must mean, as they clearly see, the redemption of the world in which man lives. When the drunkard is reformed, the house which he inhabits puts on a new face and there are flowers instead of weeds in his garden. Isaiah knew that when his people were redeemed from their captivity, the wilderness and the parched land would be glad and the desert would rejoice and blossom as the rose.

That wonderful passage in the eighth chapter of the Romans shows how strongly Paul had grasped the old prophetic idea ; he beholds the whole creation humiliated and disfigured by its share in man's degeneration, and waiting

to be delivered with man from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. That expectation is yet to be realized. It is an essential part of the Christian expectation. It is part of what redemption means.

True, it is that by the selfishness and thoughtlessness of man large portions of the earth's surface have been despoiled; mountains have been denuded of their forests; fertile lands have been worn out, and fruitful fields have become wildernesses. But we are beginning to reverse this tendency, and now many a wilderness is being reclaimed, arid plains are green with corn, and the forests are creeping back upon the hillsides. As men become socialized, as they learn to coöperate for the common good, as some sense of their social responsibility gets possession of their minds, we shall see this process extending; the waste of the common resources of the earth will cease; deserts will be visited by the life-giving water; swamps and jungles will be subdued; the earth, in many regions now uninhabited and desolate, will be made to bring forth and bud that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater.

All this is the natural result of the quickening in human hearts of the social sentiments, by which they are drawn into closer coöperation for the common good; and this quickening of the social sentiments is the work that Christ came to do, and the work that his church will be doing, with all her might, as soon as she fully understands what is her business in the world.

The redemption of the physical order will be the result of the socialization of mankind. It is an integral part of the work that Christ came into the world to do. It is part of what he meant when he said that he came to save the world. When we realize this, we get some idea of the scope of the redemption which he proclaims. It is not a superficial or a sentimental thing that he proposes; it takes hold of life with the most comprehensive grasp; it proposes to redeem not only man but his environment.

It is not, however, the redemption of the physical order to which Christ primarily addresses himself. He begins in the spiritual realm. He begins with the individual. His first concern is to reveal to every child of God the great fact of the divine Fatherhood,

and to bring him into filial relations. His whole programme for humanity rests on this simple possibility of realizing the Fatherhood of God. If this can be realized, everything else will follow. If any man is in the right filial relations with his Father in heaven, he cannot be in wrong social relations with his brother on the earth. If he is in harmony with God in thought and feeling, he must think God's thoughts about his neighbor, and the law of love will be the law of all his conduct. No man can love the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with heart and soul and mind without loving his neighbor as himself. Heartily to believe what Jesus has told us about the Father, and fully to enter into fellowship with him, is to put ourselves into such relations with our fellow men that every duty we owe them will be spontaneously performed. In a society composed of men who were thus in harmony with God the only social question for each man would be, "How can I best befriend and serve my neighbor?"

That the religion of Jesus begins here, in the heart of the individual, cannot be questioned. And it must never be forgotten that there can be no sound social construction

which does not build on this foundation. But it is well to remember also that here, as everywhere, a foundation calls for a building, and is useless and unsightly and obstructive without it. The foundation of Christianity is the reconciliation of individual souls to God, and the establishment of friendship between these individual souls and God; but what is the structure for which this foundation is laid? It is the establishment of the same divine friendship among men. That is the building for which the foundation calls. If the building does not go up, the foundation is worthless. If the building does not go up, the foundation itself will crumble and decay. The only way to save a foundation is to cover it with a building.

Fault might be found with the figure, but the fact which it imperfectly illustrates is beyond gainsaying. The right relation to God, which Jesus always makes fundamental, cannot be maintained except as it issues in right relations with men. Here is the apostle John's blunt way of putting it: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from

him, that he who loveth God love his brother also."

The commandment is, in fact, only the statement of a logical necessity. How could any human being enter into a loving communion with that great Friend whose love is always brooding over our race, who is seeking to do us good and not evil all the days of our lives, who is kind even to the unthankful and the evil, — and not be a lover of his fellow men and a servant of all their needs?

It is evident, therefore, that a religion which has no room in it for social questions cannot be the Christian religion. The social question is the one question which Christianity — genuine Christianity — never ceases to ask. The first thing it wishes to know about your religious experience is, how it affects your relations with your fellow men. It insists that your relations must first be right with God, but in the same breath it declares that there is no way of knowing whether or not your relations are right with God except by observing how you behave among your fellow men. Faith is the root, but faith without works is dead, being alone; and works concern your human relations.

These principles enable us to determine what is the business of the church. Its business is to foster and propagate Christianity, and Christianity exists to establish in this world the kingdom of heaven. The church is not, therefore, an end in itself; it is an instrument; it is a means employed by God for the promotion, in the world, of the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is not an ecclesiastical establishment; it includes the whole of life, — business, politics, art, education, philanthropy, society in the narrow sense, the family: when all these shall be pervaded and controlled by the law of love, then the kingdom of heaven will have fully come. And the business of the church in the world is to bring all these departments of life under Christ's law of love. If it seeks to convert men, it is that they may be filled with the spirit of Christ and may govern their conduct among men by Christ's law. If it gathers them together for instruction or for inspiration, it is that they may be taught Christ's way of life and sent out into the world to live as he lived among their fellow men. Its function is to fill the world with the knowledge of Christ, the love of Christ, the life of Christ. That is what Christ

meant by saving the world. The world is saved when this is true of it, and it is never saved till then. The work of the church is successful just to the extent to which it succeeds in Christianizing the social order in the midst of which it stands.

If by means of its ministrations, the community round about the church is steadily becoming more Christian; if kindness, sympathy, purity, justice, good-will, are increasing in their power over the lives of men; if business methods are becoming less rapacious; if employers and employed are more and more inclined to be friends rather than foes; if politicians are growing conscientious and unselfish; if the enemies of society are in retreat before the forces of decency and order; if amusements are becoming purer and more rational; if polite society is getting to be simpler in its tastes and less ostentatious in its manners and less extravagant in its expenditures; if poverty and crime are diminishing; if parents are becoming more wise and firm in the administration of their sacred trust, and children more loyal and affectionate to their parents,—if such fruits as these are visible on every side, then there is reason to believe that the church

knows its business and is prosecuting it with efficiency. If none of these effects are seen in the life of the community, the evidence is clear that the church is neglecting its business, and that failure must be written across its record.

Even though it be true that large numbers are added to its membership, that its congregations are crowded, its revenues abundant, its missionary contributions liberal, and its social prestige high; yet if the standards of social morality in its neighborhood are sinking rather than rising, and the general social drift and tendency is toward animalism and greed and luxury and strife, the church must be pronounced a failure: nay, even if it be believed that the church is succeeding in getting a great many people safely to heaven when they die; yet if the social tendencies in the world about it are all downward, its work, on the whole, must be regarded as a failure. Its main business is not saving people out of the world, it is saving the world. When it is evident that the world, under its ministration, is growing no better but rather worse, no matter what other good things it may have the credit of doing, the verdict is against it.

This judgment rests, of course, against the

collective church of the community or the nation, rather than against any local congregation. It may be that there are a hundred churches in a city, and that ten of them are working efficiently to leaven society with Christian ideas and principles, while the other ninety are content to fill up their membership lists and furnish the consolations of religion to the people who make up their congregations. The church of that city would probably be a failure, but the ten congregations which had accepted Christ's idea of the church and were striving to realize it could not be charged with the failure. They would have done what they could to prevent it. If the rest had been working in the same way, the results would have been different.

The point on which attention must be fixed is simply this, that the test of the efficiency of the church must be found in the social conditions of the community to which it ministers. Its business is to Christianize that community. There is no question but that the resources are placed within its reach by which this business may be done. If it is done, the church may hope to hear the commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" If

it is not done, no matter how many other gains are made, the church must expect the condemnation of its Master.

It must not be gathered from this argument that the church in modern life is a failure. There may be discouraging signs, reasons for solicitude; but it may appear, after all, that the signs are on the whole encouraging. We are not maintaining that the social tendencies in modern society are all downward; far from it. We are simply pointing out that it is only by observing these tendencies that we can judge whether or not the church is fulfilling its mission.

It is greatly to be feared, however, that many of the churches of the present day fail to apply this test to themselves. Their social responsibility is by no means so clear to them as it ought to be. Indeed, there are not a few among them that spurn it altogether, declaring that their business is to save souls; that the condition of the social order is no concern of theirs.

There is some reason to believe that phrases of this kind are often used without due consideration of their meaning. What is meant by the saving of a soul? Is not the one sin

from which souls need to be saved the sin of selfishness? Is not the death that threatens the souls of men, from which we seek to rescue them, simply the result of the violation of Christ's law of love? What is salvation but bringing them back to obedience of this law? And this law finds expression in the social order — can find expression nowhere else. It is the law of our social relations. What possible evidence can you have that a soul is saved until you see it entering into social relations and behaving properly in them?

It is to be feared that these very simple truths are not always so well understood as they should be. There is a notion that salvation is something metaphysical, or legal, or sentimental; that it consists in the belief of certain propositions or the experience of certain emotions. But all this is delusive and puerile. If it is with the heart that man believeth, he "believeth *unto righteousness;*" that is the destination of his faith; and unless his faith goes that way and reaches that goal, there is no salvation in it. Righteousness is the result of saving faith; and "he that *doeth* righteousness is righteous" — none else. Righteousness is right relations — first with

God, and then with men. And no man can have any evidence that he is in right relations with God except as he finds himself in right relations with men.

The message of Christianity, we often hear it said, is to the individual. Yes, it is; and what is the message of Christianity to the individual? The first thing that it tells him is that he is not, in strictness, an individual, any more than a hand or a foot or an eye or an ear is an individual; that he is a member of a body; that he derives all that is highest and most essential in his life from the life of humanity, to which he is vitally and organically related; that no man liveth to himself; that his good is not, and can never be, an exclusive personal good, — that it is in what he shares with all the rest. The doom from which Christianity seeks to save the individual is the doom of moral individualism; the blessedness into which it seeks to lead him is the blessedness of love.

Thus it appears that even these cant phrases by which the church sometimes tries to fence itself off from the world into a pietistic religiousness that has little or nothing to do with life, all point, when you get their real

significance, to a relation between the church and the social order so close and vital that any attempt to sever the bond must be fatal to the life of both. The church is in the world to save the world; that is its business; and it can never know whether it is succeeding in its business unless it keeps a vigilant eye on all that is going on in the world, and shapes its activities to secure in the world right social relations among men.

In what manner the church is to carry forward this work of Christianizing society is a practical question calling for great wisdom. It may not be needful that the church should undertake to organize the industrial or political or domestic or philanthropic machinery of society. Its business is not, ordinarily, to construct social machinery; its business is to furnish social motive power. It is the dynamic of society for which it is responsible. But the dynamic which it furnishes must be *a dynamic which will create the machinery.* Life makes its own forms. And the church must fill society with a kind of life which will produce such forms of coöperation as shall secure the prevalence of justice and friendship, of peace and good-will among men. It may not

be required to look after details, but it must make sure of the results. If the results are secured, if society is Christianized, if the social order is producing a better breed of men, if the business of the world goes on more and more smoothly, and all things are working together to increase the sum of human welfare, then the church may be sure that the life which she is contributing to the vitalization of society is the life that is life indeed. But if the social tendencies are all in the other direction, then she should awaken to the fact that the light that is in her must be darkness, and that the responsibility for this failure lies at her doors.

It is the recognition and acceptance of this responsibility for which we are pleading. That the church, in all the ages, has very imperfectly comprehended this responsibility is a lamentable fact. What the social aims of Jesus himself were, most of us can fairly understand. The Sermon on the Mount indicates to us the kind of society which he expected to see established on the earth. He never defined the kingdom of heaven, which he bade us seek first, but he described it in so many ways that we know very well what manner of society it

would be. But the church which has called itself by his name has but feebly grasped the truth he taught. As a late writer has said: "As soon as the thoughts of a great spiritual leader pass to others and form the animating principle of a party, or school, or sect, there is an inevitable drop. The disciples cannot keep pace with the sweep of the Master. They flutter where he soared. They coarsen and materialize his dreams. . . . This is the tragedy of all who lead. The farther they are in advance of their times, the more they will be misunderstood and misrepresented by the very men who swear by their name and strive to enforce their ideas and aims. If the followers of Jesus had preserved his thought and spirit without leakage, evaporation, or adulteration, it would be a fact unique in history."[1]

That his disciples held fast so many of the ideas and impulses he imparted to them, and that they have been turned to so large account in the reconstruction of the social order, is matter for profound thankfulness. But much of this has been indirectly wrought; the Christian elements which appear in the industrial

[1] Rauschenbusch: *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, pp. 93, 94.

order of to-day are largely of the nature of by-products. It can hardly be said that the church of Jesus Christ has ever, in any age, consciously and clearly set before herself the business which he committed to her hands. She has always been putting the emphasis somewhere else than where he put it; she has always been doing something else instead of the great task which he began and left her to finish. It is the great failure of history — the turning aside of the Christian church from the work of Christianizing the social order, and the expenditure of her energies, for nineteen centuries, on other pursuits.

The writer from whom I quoted devotes a very interesting chapter to the reasons why the church has never attempted the work of social reconstruction. He shows that it would have been almost impossible in the early Christian centuries for the Christians to have undertaken any work of social reform; if, under the rigors of the Roman despotism, they had meddled with politics, they would have lost their heads. Then they began to look for a miraculous return of Jesus to set up his kingdom in the world, and they waited for him to reconstruct the social order. That expectation

held them for a thousand years. When it failed, they turned their thoughts to heaven, and "as the eternal life came to the front in Christian hope the kingdom of God receded to the background, and with it went much of the social potency of Christianity. The kingdom of God was a social and collective hope, and it was for this earth. The eternal life was an individualistic hope, and it was not for this earth. The kingdom of God involved the social transformation of humanity. The hope of eternal life, as it was then held, was the desire to escape from this world and be done with it." And this led to the ascetic tendency, which made men think this world not worth mending. Then came in the paganizing influences of the Middle Ages, which made ritual the supreme thing and paralyzed the ethical motive; and then followed the controversies about dogma, which deadened the life of the church, until finally the great ecclesiasticism was developed, and the church, instead of being the instrument for the Christianization of the world, became an empire in itself, separate from the world, arrogating to itself all the honors and powers of the kingdom of God. "By that substitution," says Professor

Rauschenbusch, "the church could claim all service and absorb all social energies. It has often been said that the church interposed between man and God. It also interposed between man and humanity. It magnified what he did for the church and belittled what he did for humanity. It made its own organization the chief object of social service."[1]

This is only a hint of the process by which the church has been deflected from its course, and hindered from undertaking, with conscious purpose and consecrated power, her own proper work. She has done many other things, some beautiful and excellent things, but the one thing she was sent to do she has not done.

It is only in our own time that she has begun to get hold of the true conception of her business in the world. That the church is here to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, to concentrate her energies upon realizing the kingdom of God in the world, now begins to be evident to men of insight; and there is a loud call upon her to bestir herself and take up this work so long neglected, and give to it all her energies. That is the

[1] Page 182.

meaning of the cry, "Back to Christ," which we are hearing in this generation. It means that the church needs to get into sympathy with its Leader and Lord, to try to understand his social aims, and to understand what he meant when he bade us seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Two or three practical suggestions may be ventured here to those who have followed this argument.

We have seen that, since religion is a permanent need of human nature, and since the church is indispensable to the maintenance of religion, it becomes the duty of good men and women to ally themselves with the church and help to make it efficient. But there are churches and churches. We cannot help noting, as we look over the community, some churches which at least dimly understand their business, and some which obviously do not.

Some of us may be connected by birth or confession with churches that do comprehend their true function. If so, let us rejoice in that fact, and give our strength to the support of such churches in their work. It is, far and away, the most important work that is being done in the world at the present day. If we

can have part in it, we ought to rejoice in that privilege.

We may be connected with churches which do not understand their business. Possibly we may think that the best thing for us to do is to come out of them, and seek fellowship with churches more enlightened. Let us think two or three times before we decide upon this. Perhaps the best thing we can do is to stay where we are and use our best endeavors, modestly and patiently, to bring our own church to a realization of its responsibilities.

We may not be identified with any church. If we are not, then it is clearly the part of wisdom for each one to find the church which seems to him to understand its business best, and to give the strength of his life to making its life vigorous and its work efficient.

V

IS THE CHURCH DECADENT?

THE assertion is often made that the church is an effete institution; that its usefulness is past; that it is sinking into innocuous desuetude. That assertion has been current for a thousand years — perhaps longer; there have been many periods in which it was urged much more confidently than it is to-day. This fact would suggest caution in pressing such a judgment. Wise physicians do not hastily pronounce the word of doom. They have seen too many patients return from the gates of death. Men and women who, in their younger days, appear to have a slender hold on life, often reach a vigorous old age. The same thing is true of institutions. It is not prudent to assume that because they are ailing they are moribund.

The Christian church, as we have seen, is far from being in perfect spiritual condition. Some of her symptoms are disquieting. But even as we often have good hope for our

friends when their health is impaired, and find that there are good reasons for our hope, so we need not despair of the recovery of the church from the morbid conditions which we acknowledge and deplore. That the patient has a good constitution and surprising vitality is indicated by the experience of nineteen centuries. More than once, through this long lifetime, she has been in a worse way than she is to-day, but she has rallied, and returned to her work with new vigor.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century her case seemed to be desperate; but heroic remedies were used, and while the cure was far from complete, and did not reach the root of the malady, there was at least a partial recovery. In England at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and in America at the end of the same century, the symptoms were alarming; but she lived through those critical periods, and has done better work since than ever before.

That the work of the church has been sadly misdirected; that she has often put the emphasis in the wrong place; that while she has been doing many things that were worth doing she has largely left undone the main thing she was sent to do, was made plain by our

study in the last chapter. And there can be no doubt that this misdirection of her energies, and this failure to exercise her strength in normal ways, have resulted in many morbid conditions, some of which she has partly overcome, but from some of which she is still suffering.

With the disorders from which the church has suffered in past generations we need not now concern ourselves. But the weaknesses and ailments of the present time demand our attention. We must know what they are that we may help to cure them. That responsibility rests upon us all. If the church is to be made whole, it must be by the intelligent and normal action of the men and women who are members of the church. We must know, to begin with, what health is, and what is disease; we must have some clear idea of what would be the normal condition of Christian society.

Men sometimes mistake conditions of disease for conditions of health. In cases of nervous breakdown, patients are often spurred on, by the malady itself, to work when they ought to rest. The less able to work they are, the harder they work. They do not know that

this restless activity is a sign of disease, they think it is proof of abounding vitality. And there are many ways in which morbid conditions tend to propagate themselves. The instinctive impulses of an invalid are not safe guides. Yet there are many cases in which, even if the man is not his own medical adviser, he must have an intelligent idea of what ails him, in order that he may be able to follow medical advice, and adopt the regimen which leads to health. His reason must be summoned to discern and resist his morbid impulses, and keep himself in the ways of life.

Equally true is it that if the church, which is the body of Christ, is out of health, the men and women who are the members of that body must know what ails them, and how to supply the remedy. And when they summon their reason and seek to have it divinely enlightened, they are likely to discover that many of their worst disorders are conditions which they have been cherishing; that some of the things they have been most proud of are ills that they must pray and work to be rid of.

1. The first and the worst of the church's infirmities is unbelief. In one of the moments

of vision, when the long obscuration of his light in the future centuries was revealed to him, Jesus sadly wondered whether, when the Son of Man came, he would find faith on the earth. The pathetic query has always been pertinent. Faith is the vital force of Christianity, and the weakening of that vital force is the prime cause of all its disorders.

The unbelief which brings enfeeblement and decay to the church of Christ is not, however, the kind of unbelief which the church is most apt to reprove.

There is, doubtless, in the church of to-day some weakening of faith in the historical facts of the Christian religion, and in the central doctrines of the Christian creed. Science and criticism have rendered incredible some statements which once were universally accepted. Considerable revision of theological belief has been found necessary, and it is probable that in this process the hold of some upon the central verities has been relaxed.

It may even be that the theories of some Christian confessors respecting the person of Christ have been modified, so that his humanity is more strongly affirmed than once it was. To some persons this change of empha-

sis may seem to be a serious form of unbelief.

Admitting all this, however, these intellectual changes are not the principal cause of the enfeeblement of the church. These changes, however we may regard them, have affected but a small minority of the members of our churches; the great majority of them continue to hold substantially the same theological opinions that they have always held. The trouble with the church is not chiefly a lack of faith in the creeds, it is a lack of faith in Christ. And it is not a lack of faith in the metaphysical theories of Christ's person, but a lack of faith in the truth of his teaching. It is an unbelief in which the most orthodox people are quite as much involved as those who are considered heretics.

The central question is not, after all, what we think about the nature of Christ. There is good reason to believe that none of the twelve apostles held, during the life of our Lord, opinions which would be regarded as orthodox concerning his person. They believed that he was a great Prophet, a revealer of God; nay, they believed that he was the Messiah, the long promised King, who was to set up his kingdom

in this world. Of this they had no doubt. This was the belief that Jesus himself sought to fasten in their minds; and when he had drawn from Simon Peter a confession of this faith he cried out, "Blessed art thou, Simon son of John; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." It was this faith in him as Lord and Ruler of men, as the Founder in this world of a kingdom of righteousness and peace, on which, as he declared, his church should be builded. Such faith as this these twelve men had. They would have found it difficult, probably, to assent to the Nicene Creed or the Athanasian Creed; but they believed in Jesus as Lord and King, and they believed every word of his Magna Charta found in the Sermon on the Mount; and they were ready to do what they could to establish that kingdom in this world.

It is just here that the faith of the church is lacking. It believes the Nicene Creed, but it does not believe the Sermon on the Mount. It believes what men have said about Christ; it does not believe what Christ himself said. It does not accept the practical rule of life which he has laid down. It does not believe that the Golden Rule is workable in modern life. It

does not believe that it is feasible to love our neighbors as ourselves. It does not believe in the kingdom of heaven as a present possibility. It expects that Christ will come, by and by, in person, with miraculous power, to revolutionize society, and that after that it will be practicable to follow the law of love, in all our human relations; but, for the present, we must let the law of competition control all our practical affairs.

Of course it is not often that the teachings of Christ are directly controverted; they are generally ignored, or passed by, as "counsels of perfection" which we are to admire rather than obey. But we sometimes find arguments in which disbelief in the teachings of Jesus is distinctly justified. In a late volume, one of the great leaders of the German church elaborately contends that we cannot follow Jesus in his social teachings. "Our attitude toward the world," says Herrmann, "cannot be that of Jesus; even the purpose to will that it should be so is stifled in the air that we breathe to-day. The state of affairs is very clearly described by Naumann, who says with truth: 'Therefore we do not seek Jesus' advice on points connected with the management of the

state and political economy.' But when he goes on to say: 'I give my vote and I canvass for the fleet, not because I am a Christian, but because I am a citizen, and because I have learned to renounce all hope of finding fundamental questions of state determined in the Sermon on the Mount,' we can detect a fallacy. He regards as painful renunciation what ought, on the part of the Christian, to be a free, decisive, and voluntary act." [1]

Naumann repudiates, rather regretfully, the counsels of Jesus about economic and civil affairs, but Herrmann says that he does it lightheartedly, because he has found out that these counsels are not applicable to existing conditions.

It is evident that these counsels must be rationally applied, — the spirit and not the letter of them is the essential thing; but what these teachers mean is more than this. How far they have departed from the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount is indicated by the words already quoted. The reason why Naumann does not seek the advice of Jesus in questions of public concern is that he is de-

[1] *The Social Gospel*, Harnack and Herrmann, pp. 216, 217.

termined to give his vote and influence for the German fleet; and Herrmann is following the same impulse when he characterizes the call for the disarmament of the nations as a "noble folly." It is evident that the reason why these teachers feel that the way of Jesus is impracticable is that they are fully committed to the ideas of German imperialism. To conceive that nations could dispense with war is a "noble folly." And, for the same reason, they conceive that any attempt to substitute coöperation for competition in the industrial world would be disastrous to modern society. The morality of strife outranks, in their judgment, the morality of service and sacrifice. The law of Jesus may be permitted to hold some subordinate place; it will be found useful in mitigating the savagery of strife; but as the regulative principle of the industrial order it is not to be considered.

The attempt of these German theologians to frame a philosophical refutation of the Sermon on the Mount gives us something of a shock; but, practically, this has been the attitude of the church in all the generations. The hopeful sign is that it does now give us a shock to have the doctrine badly stated.

Through a large part of the Christian era the teaching of Jesus with respect to strife has been flouted by the church. The bitterest and most wasteful wars have been religious wars. The disciples of the Prince of Peace saw no incongruity in the settlement by the sword of such questions as whether Jesus Christ was of the same substance as the Father or of a similar substance; and whether the cup should be administered to the laity in the Eucharist or only the bread. The Thirty Years' war in Europe was a religious war. Roman Catholic theories still maintain the right of the church to enforce its teachings by the sword.

All these facts show how far, through all its history, the church has departed from the teaching of Jesus. When our German theologians set themselves to prove that the Sermon on the Mount is no sufficient guide for public affairs, they have the whole history of the church behind them.

Nevertheless they might have noted that the drift, for the last few centuries, has been in the direction of the teaching of Jesus. It is hardly conceivable that Christian nations should go to war to-day for the settlement of points of doctrine. Three hundred years ago

the whole church thought that necessary; today a very large part of the church would think it horrible and monstrous. It is not very long ago that the church believed in the settlement by force of disputes between individuals. The wager of battle was supposed to be a proper and Christian way of determining the guilt or innocence of an accused person. To most of the great Christians of the fifteenth century the proposition to dispense with that would have seemed a "noble folly," just as the proposition of general disarmament now seems to some twentieth century Christians. But the church has learned that there are better ways of settling personal quarrels than the wager of battle; and it is likely to learn, after a while, that there are better ways of settling international and industrial difficulties than the way of war. The church is beginning to see that the way of Jesus is not, after all, so impracticable as it has always been supposed to be; it is beginning to discern the truth that the law of service is a stronger law than the law of strife. One of these days we shall find the church of Jesus taking its stand on the Golden Rule as the practical rule of every-day life, and insisting upon the organization

of the industrial and the political order on the basis of good-will. When that day comes we shall have a right to say that the church believes in Jesus Christ. When that day comes it will be evident to all that the main cause of the church's enfeeblement through all these centuries has been her unbelief. And we shall marvel that it took her so long to find out what might there is in meekness and what force in gentleness; and that it was so hard for her to understand that the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God stronger than men.

2. The second of the church's chronic infirmities has been orthodoxism. Perhaps it was the recoil of her unbelief in Christ that sent her over into the intellectual prostration of orthodoxism.

Orthodoxy is defined as correct belief. But when we ask what is correct belief, orthodoxy answers: "That which is generally believed to be correct." Its demand is, therefore, conformity to current opinion. It assumes that essential truth has been sought out, registered and certified once for all and finally: this you must believe, and you must believe nothing other or more than this. Of course, then, belief

must be stereotyped and stationary. There can be no growth of doctrine; no new light can break forth from God's holy word.

"Orthodoxy begins," says Phillips Brooks, "by setting a false standard of life. It makes men aspire after soundness in the faith rather than after richness in the truth. . . . It makes possible an easy transmission of truth, but only by the deadening of truth, as a butcher freezes meat in order to carry it across the sea. Orthodoxy discredits and discourages inquiry, and has made the name of free thinker, which ought to be a crown and glory, a stigma of disgrace. It puts men in the base and demoralizing position in which they apologize for seeking new truth. It is responsible for a large part of the defiant liberalism which not merely disbelieves the orthodox dogma, but disbelieves it with a sense of attempted wrong and of triumphant escape. It is orthodoxy and not truth which has done the persecuting. The inquisitions and dungeons and social ostracisms for opinion's sake belong to it." [1]

It is evident that when for loyalty to the truth is substituted loyalty to a prescribed

[1] *Essays and Addresses*, p. 194.

statement of truth, the entire moral order is subverted. Truth for me is what justifies itself to my reason and insight; to that my choices must conform; by that my conduct must be guided. To accept statements to which my judgment does not assent, which are repugnant to my reason, because others seek to impose them upon me, is in the highest degree immoral. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind," is the apostolic maxim.

Every honest man wants to know what is true, and seeks to have his character and his conduct conform to the truth. But orthodoxy insists that he shall limit his acceptance to fixed and definite statements prepared for him by others. Freedom of investigation is denied him. The limits are set, beyond which his thought must not range. If there is truth outside of the boundaries of orthodoxy, he must not reach out after it; if he does, he shall suffer the consequences.

For there always is a penalty for heresy. Those who diverge from the orthodox standards are always exposed to some measure of censure or discredit. In former days the stake or the gallows was the penalty. John Huss

and Michael Servetus, Ridley, Latimer, and Cranmer were put to death on the demand of orthodoxy. It was not because they were not lovers and seekers of truth; it was because they declined to assent to the statements which authority sought to impose on them. Orthodoxy has found a great variety of methods of enforcing its demand; in recent times it does not often resort to physical coercion, but it never fails to use some kind of pressure. Those to whom orthodoxy is dearer than truth have ways of their own, even now, of making uncomfortable those to whom truth is dearer than orthodoxy. Thus it is that the progress of truth has been greatly impeded. "Ye shall know the truth," said Jesus, "and the truth shall make you free." "Ye shall know," says orthodoxism, "only the truth that has been prescribed and ticketed by authority; ye shall be taught what is orthodox, and orthodoxy shall keep you safe and sound." The entire attitude of the mind is changed, under this demand. It is no longer that of free inquiry, of open-minded search for truth; it is that of passive assent, of unreasoned submission to authority.

Just to the extent to which orthodoxism

succeeds in forcing its demand is progress rendered impossible. There have always been brave men to whom truth was dearer than orthodoxy, and to them we owe all the gains the church has made. "The lower orders of the church's workers, the mere runners of her machinery," says Bishop Brooks, "have always been strictly and scrupulously orthodox; while all the church's noblest servants, they who have opened to her new heavens of vision and new domains of work, — Paul, Origen, Tertullian, Dante, Abélard, Luther, Milton, Coleridge, Maurice, Swedenborg, Martineau, — have again and again been persecuted for being what they truly were — unorthodox." [1]

The temper of coercion, physical or moral, which is an essential element in orthodoxism, always produces, in those who do not submit to it, the temper of resentment and rebellion, which largely characterizes what is known as liberalism. Those who are thus flung off into opposition are in no mood to examine fairly the truth that there is in orthodoxy. Their mental attitude is apt to be quite as unfavorable to the discovery of the truth as that of the other party. Between those who affirm,

[1] *Essays and Addresses*, p. 189.

with the threat of the withdrawal of fellowship, and those who deny, with the sense of injury and oppression, the truth has a poor chance for itself in this world. The enfeeblement of the church, in all the generations, has been largely due to this cause.

What orthodoxism produces when it has free course and is glorified, may be seen in the Greek church. More than any other branch of the Christian church the Greek church has put the emphasis upon orthodoxy. The natural and inevitable result has been that that church has destroyed itself and the nation whose life it has dominated and blighted. It is the Greek church that has led Russia to its doom. And it is orthodoxism that has made the Greek church a blind leader of the blind, and has plunged nation and church into the ditch together.

Truth, not orthodoxy, is the sovereign mistress of the human intellect. What I must know, for my salvation, is not what everybody says, but what is true. There is old truth — truth that has nourished the lives of men in many generations; let me cling to that and feed my soul upon it. There is new truth — some fuller outshining of the great revelation

of God, in nature or in human nature; let me hail that light and walk in it.

It is often useful for me to know what others have believed and now believe. Not to be influenced by the consenting voices of the great and good of the past would be childish egotism. But it is always needful that my mind should be open to new truth and that I should be free to seek it. Orthodoxism restricts this right and disparages this privilege, and in doing this it has greatly weakened the Christian church.

Several other sources of weakness must be treated much more briefly.

3. Sectarianism is not the least among them. To a large degree it is the product of orthodoxism. Men who venture to think for themselves are driven forth from the fold of the faithful and compelled to organize in separate groups. Sometimes they are not driven out, they go out and slam the doors behind them. The seceders often claim a superior orthodoxy; their separation from the fold is an act of judgment on those they leave behind. The responsibility for these divisions sometimes rests more heavily on those who go out, and sometimes on those who stay in. On the

one side or the other, often on both sides, pride of opinion is a main procuring cause. Sometimes men go out because they desire to hold fast in peace the truth which they have found, and sometimes they are thrust out because they will not permit those who are within to hold fast in peace the truth which is their inheritance.

The ambition of leadership also figures largely. Men who are not able to control the church to which they belong are often tempted to lead away a faction in which they may be more conspicuous. Satan, according to the Miltonic mythology, was the founder of the first sect; and his philosophy was that it was better to reign in hell than serve in heaven. The leaders of many of the sects have had a similar inspiration.

It would not be true to say that all schisms have sprung from selfishness: they have often originated in a larger vision of the truth, and their testimony, which has cost them many sacrifices, has enlarged the thought and enriched the life of the whole church.

It must, however, be admitted that selfishness, in the forms of ambition and pride of opinion, has had more to do with the multi-

plication of sects than love of the truth or loyalty to the Master. The existence of such numbers of organizations, differing from one another only in the most trivial particulars, cannot be reconciled with the plain principles of Christian morality. There is no justification, in reason or conscience, for the existence of so many sorts and kinds and classes of Christian disciples. Even if we could admit the wisdom of the larger divisions, what excuse can be offered for the endless subdivisions? What possible need can there be for thirteen different kinds of Baptists, and twelve kinds of Mennonites, and eleven kinds of Presbyterians, and seventeen kinds of Methodists, and twenty-three kinds of Lutherans? Could any rational man maintain that these multitudinous variations on a single string represent distinctions that are useful?

The rivalries and competitions which these sectarian divisions promote are the scandal and the curse of Christendom. The sectarian procedure habitually and brazenly sets aside the Golden Rule and pushes partisan interest, with very slight regard for fairness or equity. Churches are all the while doing to other churches what they would not like to have

other churches do to them. "Every church for itself, and the angels take the hindmost," is the sectarian motto. The competition which exists in the ecclesiastical realm is almost always cutthroat competition; it destroys property and crowds out rivals with merciless purpose.

No argument should be needed to show that the existence of such a spirit and tendency in the church must cripple its power and impede its growth. The sect spirit is the antithesis of the Christian spirit; the sectarian propaganda is an attack upon the fundamental principle of Christianity, which is unity through love. The superior loyalty of every true Christian is due to the kingdom of God. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness!" What makes a man a sectarian is the fact that he loves his sect more than the kingdom of God, and is willing that the kingdom of God should suffer loss in order that his sect may make a gain. Sectarians are doing this very thing, all over the land, every day.

How great have been the injuries suffered by the Christian church through the existence of this antichristian spirit of sect it would be

difficult to estimate. How alien it is to the spirit of Jesus Christ one does not need to point out. It is simply amazing that the followers of him who prayed, in his last prayer, that his disciples might all be one, in order that the world might believe in his divine commission, should imagine that they can be pleasing Christ while they persist in these childish divisions.

Some sense of the shame and sin of sectarianism has, of late years, been getting possession of the mind of the church, and the tendencies toward unity are stronger now than the tendencies toward division. Splits and secessions are rare in these times; movements toward unity are multiplying. All this is hopeful, but many generations of toil and sacrifice will be required to recover for the church the ground she has lost by the ravages of sectarianism.

4. Only one more cause of the enfeeblement of the church can be mentioned here; that is her too close reliance upon the principles and forces of the material realm. She too often forgets whence her help must come; she is too willing to go down to Egypt for her allies instead of trusting in the Lord of

Hosts. She cannot always understand that she is safer and stronger when she puts her entire reliance on moral and spiritual forces; when she refuses to sacrifice truth for the revenues of the rich or the friendship of the strong.

The church is probably suffering more from this cause at this day than she has ever suffered in any former period. She lives in the midst of the abounding marvels of the materialistic civilization; she sees how much is accomplished through the use of material forces; and the spirit of the time gets into her brain and blood, and she begins to think that money and the things that money can buy are the most essential conditions of her growth and usefulness. Therefore she makes such friendships and adopts such policies as will bring to her the revenues she thinks she must have for the prosecution of her work. And thus her vision is dimmed for the truth she needs to see, and her arm is weakened for the work she has to do.

No influence so insidious as this, and none so fatal, has ever assailed the Christian church. She is passing through her greatest temptation. It is Mammon who has taken her up

into an exceeding high mountain and shown her the kingdoms she wants to conquer and the glory she hopes to win, and is saying to her: "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me!" May God grant her the grace to answer: "Get thee behind me, Satan; I hear the voice of one who said: Thou shall worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

That the church has suffered serious injury and enfeeblement from the causes we have considered, — from her lack of faith, from her subjection to orthodoxism, from the ravages of sectarianism, from her entanglements with Mammon, no one can deny. But that these evils are tending to increase is not evident. There is reason rather to hope that they are all on the wane, unless it be the last.

That the church is far from being in perfect spiritual condition we will all admit. But that she is growing worse rather than better we need not believe. Most of these maladies are of long standing, but they are less acute now than once they were, and there is better hope of recovery. Above all, we may say that the church knows to-day what ails her better than

she ever knew before, and that she may therefore more intelligently proceed to apply the needful remedies.

What kind of treatment is called for will be the subject of the next discussion.

VI

THE COMING REFORMATION

It would be instructive to study the attempts which the church has made, in past generations, to escape from the evil conditions into which she has fallen. For she has been convicted more than once of her sins of omission, of the perversion of her powers, and the misuse of her opportunities, and has bestirred herself to cast off the yokes that were oppressing her, and the bands that were impeding her progress. It cannot be said that she has ever yet become fully conscious of her radical defect. She has never quite clearly discovered that her enfeeblement and failure are primarily due to the fact that she has been neglecting her real business in the world, or making it a secondary concern. When she gets that truth fully before her mind, and that conviction upon her conscience, we may hope for better things.

There was, however, one epoch in her history when she came very near making this

discovery. That was the period of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. What happened then is full of interest for us in these days; it throws a flood of light on the problems with which we are dealing.

We have been taught by the historians of the Reformation to think of that event as mainly a theological crisis, as an intellectual revolt against certain doctrines imposed by the church upon the faithful, or a rebellion against the stringency of ecclesiastical discipline. That issues of this nature were deeply involved in it is true; but these were by no means the only causes of that uprising. It was largely a social and economic movement. It was, in its inception, less a reaction against bad theology than a revolt against unchristian social conditions. What weighed most heavily on the people who started the uprising that we call the Reformation was not theological error and confusion, it was their poverty, their servitude, the miseries and wrongs of their daily life. They knew something of the Christ of Nazareth, and they could not believe that he meant to leave them in that condition, and therefore they began to have a dim sense of the truth that the church which bore his name

was misrepresenting him, and needed to be reformed. This was the source of the movement known as the Reformation. It was, therefore, a sharp reminder to the church that she had wholly forgotten her main business in the world.

One of the latest of the histories of the Reformation, that of Dr. Thomas M. Lindsay, brings this truth into clear light. His chapter on "Social Conditions" gives us a vivid sketch of the economic and social forces which were operating at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century.

It was the time of transition from the old system of home production and home markets to the era of world-wide commerce. Under the old system, industry had been largely regulated by guilds, and there was a fair measure of equality; while trade, though not extensive, was regulated by civic leagues.

But the end of the fifteenth century brought the great geographical discoveries and the beginning of a world trade. "The possibilities of a world commerce," says Dr. Lindsay, "led to the creation of trading companies; for a larger capital was needed than individual merchants possessed, and the formation of

these companies overshadowed, discredited, and finally destroyed the guild system of the mediæval trading cities. Trade and industry became capitalized to a degree previously unknown. . . . This increase of wealth does not seem to have been confined to a few favorites of fortune. It belonged to the mass of the members of the great trading companies. . . . Merchant princes confronted the princes of the state and those of the church, and their presence and power dislocated the old social relations." [1]

This enormous increase of wealth manifested itself in every form of senseless luxury. Of refinement there was little; pleasures were coarse, indulgence was beastly. "Preachers, economists, and satirists," says Dr. Lindsay, "denounce the luxury and immodesty of the dress both of men and women, the gluttony and the drinking habits of the rich burghers and of the nobility of Germany. We learn from Hans von Schweinichen that noblemen prided themselves on having men among their retainers who could drink all rivals beneath the table, and that noble personages seldom met without such a drinking contest. The

[1] *A History of the Reformation*, vol. i, pp. 85, 86.

wealthy, learned, and artistic city of Nürnberg possessed a public wagon which every night was led through the streets, to pick up and convey to their homes drunken burghers found lying in the filth of the streets." [1]

Such were the manners of the house of mirth at the beginning of the sixteenth century. It might be supposed that when luxury was so riotous the poor would have plenty, but that is never the case. Profusion at the top of the social ladder means poverty at the bottom. The world has never yet been so rich that waste did not work harm to the neediest. Even if the poor had been actually no poorer in these flush days than they had been when manners were simpler, the glaring contrasts would have been maddening. But multitudes of them were, no doubt, not only relatively but positively poorer; the destruction of the guilds of labor, the displacements in industry, had left great numbers not only of the peasantry and the artisans but also of the poorer nobles in practical destitution. The organization of society was giving strength to the strong and weakness to those of no might — thus exactly reversing Mary's prophecy of what her royal

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 87, 88.

Son should bring; and those who were thus dispossessed and scattered felt, and had a right to feel, that the social organization under which such things could be done was anti-christian.

"While," says Dr. Lindsay, "the social tumults and popular uprisings against authority, which are a feature of the close of the Middle Ages, are usually and rightly enough called peasant insurrections, the name tends to obscure their real character. They were rather the revolts of the poor against the rich, of debtors against creditors, of men who had scantly legal rights or none at all, against those who had the protection of the existing laws; and they were joined by the poor of the towns as well as by the peasantry of the country districts. The peasants generally began the revolt and the townsmen followed, but this was not always the case. Sometimes the mob of the cities rose first and the peasants joined afterwards. In many cases, too, the poorer nobles were in secret or open sympathy with the insurrectionary movement. On more than one occasion they led the insurgents and fought at their head." [1]

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 96.

The uprising against the church was due to the fact that the church, instead of being the friend of the poor, had become their social oppressor. Through all these social mutterings runs the outcry against the priests, and this was not because the priests were teaching a false theology, but because they were grinding the faces of the poor. Not only in Germany, but all over Europe this cry was heard. "The priests," says an English reformer, "have their tenth part of all the corn, meadows, pasture, grain, wood, colts, lambs, geese, and chickens. Over and besides the tenth part of every servant's wages, wool, milk, honey, wax, cheese, and butter; yea and they look so narrowly after these profits that the poor wife must be accountable to them for every tenth egg, or else she getteth not her rights at Easter, and shall be taken as a heretic." "I see," said a Spaniard, "that we can scarcely get anything from Christ's ministers but for money; at baptism money, at bishoping money, at marriage money, for confession money, — no, not extreme unction without money! They will ring no bells without money, no burial in the church without money; so that it seemeth that Paradise is

shut up from them that hath no money. The rich is buried in the church, the poor in the churchyard. The rich man may marry with his nearest kin, but the poor not so, albeit he be ready to die for love of her. The rich may eat flesh in Lent, but the poor may not, albeit fish perhaps be much dearer. The rich man may readily get large indulgences, but the poor none because he wanteth money to pay for them." [1]

This revolt against priestly oppression was by no means, however, an irreligious uprising. It was characterized by intense religious feeling, with which, as Dr. Lindsay says, "was blended some confused dream that the kingdom of God might be set up on earth, if only the priests were driven out of the land." Among a populace so ignorant it was, of course, inevitable that the social revolt should take on fanatical forms. Wild zealots arose, drawing the multitude after them, and inciting the people to revolution. Hans Böhm, a wandering piper, had visions and went forth as a preacher of righteousness, railing against priests and civil potentates. True religion, he declared, consisted in worshiping the Blessed

[1] Seebohm, *The Era of the Protestant Revolution*, pp. 57, 58.

Virgin, but the priests were thieves and robbers, the Emperor was a miscreant, "who supported the whole vile crew of princes, overlords, tax gatherers, and other oppressors of the poor." He predicted the coming of a day when the Emperor himself would be forced, like all poor folks, to work for days' wages. The people flocked by thousands to hear him preach, but his day was brief.

They burnt him at the stake, but multitudes venerated him, and made pilgrimages to the chapel which had been the scene of his triumph. The "Bundschuh" revolts which broke out in Elsass and spread through Switzerland and Germany were of a similar character. Then came years of famine, which deepened the popular disquiet, and which help to explain the fact that "on the eve of the Reformation the condition of Europe, and of Germany in particular, was one of seething discontent and full of bitter class hatreds — the trading companies and the great capitalists against the guilds, the poorer classes against the wealthier, and the nobles against the towns."

These were the social conditions in the midst of which Luther appeared. It was on this turbulent flood of social unrest that the

Reformation was launched. When the great reformer's voice was heard, denouncing priestly misrule and hierarchical tyranny, these were the people who listened, and they interpreted his words by their own experience. If his quarrel was largely with theological or ecclesiastical abuses, theirs was mainly with industrial inequalities, but it seemed to them that he was fighting their battle. Indeed, his brave words gave fit utterance to their hopes. For, as the historian reminds us, Luther's message was democratic. That must have been its character if it was, in any proper sense, a return to "the simplicity that is in Christ." "It destroyed the aristocracy of the saints, it leveled the barriers between the layman and the priest, it taught the equality of all men before God, and the right of every man of faith to stand in God's presence, whatever be his rank and condition of life. He had not confined himself to preaching a new theology. His message was eminently practical. In his 'Appeal to the Nobility of the German Nation' Luther had voiced all the grievances of Germany, had touched upon almost all the open sores of the time, and had foretold disasters not very far off. Nor must it be for-

gotten that no great leader ever flung about wild words in such a reckless way. Luther had the gift of strong, smiting phrases, of words which seemed to cleave to the very heart of things, of images which lit up a subject with the vividness of a flash of lightning. He launched tracts and pamphlets from the press about almost everything, written for the most part on the spur of the moment, and when the fire burned. His words fell into souls full of the fermenting passion of the times. They drank in with eagerness the thoughts that all men were equal before God, and that there are divine commands about the brotherhood of mankind of more importance than all human legislation. They refused to believe that such golden ideas belonged to the realm of spiritual life above." [1]

When, therefore, the religious reformation was fairly launched, a great uprising of the poor people speedily followed. It seemed to them that the return to Christ meant, for them, the breaking of yokes and the enlargement of opportunity, and they proceeded to claim for themselves some portion of the liberty that belonged to them. Their demands, as voiced

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 327, 328.

in their "Twelve Articles," were by no means extravagant, from our point of view. The abuses of which they complained were flagrant, the rights they claimed were far less than are now, even in despotic Russia, fully granted to the humblest people. And they protested most earnestly that they "wanted nothing contrary to the requirements of just authority, whether civil or ecclesiastical, nor to the gospel of Christ."

It would, however, have been unreasonable to expect that such people would confine their protest within the bounds of law and order. It was, in fact, a revolution, and it discerned no way to its goal but the way of violence. That, indeed, is the path that most of the seekers after liberty have felt constrained to take.

What was Luther's relation to this uprising? It cannot be said that he had kindled the flame, but he had fanned it to a conflagration. And yet when it began to rage, he found himself unable to control it. It had come to pass, in the exigencies of the warfare he was waging, that his allies were the German princes. Only through them, as he believed, could he hope to win the fight he was making against

the Roman hierarchy. If he put himself at the head of the peasants' movement he would alienate the princes, and it seemed to him that the Protestant cause in Germany would be stamped out in blood. And therefore, after vainly attempting to quiet the insurrection, with whose principal aims he had confessed himself in sympathy, he turned upon the peasants in almost savage wrath, and in his tract "Against the Murdering, Thieving Hordes of Peasants," he urged the princes to crush the insurrection. "In the case of an insurgent," he says, "every man is both judge and executioner. Therefore, whoever can should knock down, strangle, and stab such publicly or privately, and think nothing so venomous, pernicious, and devilish as an insurgent. . . . Such wonderful times are these that a prince can merit heaven better with bloodshed than another with prayer."

The princes followed Luther's counsel, and the peasants' uprising was put down with relentless severity. Thus ended in blood the movement which promised to make the church the champion of social freedom. It seems, as we look back upon it, a tragical issue. What these poor people asked for was really only a

crumb or two from the table of the lords of privilege; they thought that the brotherhood taught by Jesus warranted them in expecting it, and they seemed to hope that the church of Jesus Christ, when purified from formalism and superstition, would support that expectation. It must have been a bitter disappointment to them. And it is a sorrowful reflection that the great hero of the Reformation fell, in this matter, so far below the Christian ideal.

Doubtless his strenuous repugnance to revolutionary methods was a good trait in his character; but surely revolutions are sometimes justifiable, and it looks, at this distance, as though this one was as nearly so as most of those that have succeeded. If Luther had put his great heart and mighty will at the head of this movement which he confessed to be most righteous, it might have succeeded, and Protestantism, in its beginnings, might have made a firm alliance with those whom Jesus Christ recognizes as his representatives in the earth. But it was hard for him to believe that the poor of this world, chosen to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, were stronger allies than the German nobles. He

thought that he must have the support of the princes, and he turned his back on Christ's poor.

It was a melancholy conclusion, not only for Luther but for the cause which he represented. "It is probable," says Dr. Lindsay, "that he saved the Reformation in Germany by cutting it free from the revolutionary movement, but the wrench left marks on his own character as well as in the movement he headed." One wonders whether success won at such cost is worth having; and whether, if he had gone down with the peasants in their struggle for freedom and opportunity, the sacrifice would not have brought a larger and fairer Reformation.

It was the coming reformation to which your attention was called, and we have kept our eyes for a long time upon the past. But this history has been uttering, through the entire recital, its own prophetic word. Conditions have greatly changed since the sixteenth century; but we are still confronting the same issue which forced itself upon the church in the days of Luther. Many of the disabilities and wrongs under which the common people were suffering then have been removed, but

the poor are still with us, and the cries of millions of overworked, underfed, pale-faced men and women and children have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. There ought not to be any poor people in this country; if it were a thoroughly Christian country there would not be. If there were those who because of mental or physical defect were unable to care for themselves, we could easily provide for their wants, and in the exercise of such compassion we should find an abundant reward. If there were those who because of idleness and vice were indisposed to provide for themselves, we should find a way of inspiring them with a better mind. But, if this were a thoroughly Christian country, there would be no willing workers dwelling anywhere near the borders of want. There are resources here which are ample for the abundant supply of all human needs; if ours were a completely Christianized society, the needs of those who were able and willing to work would be abundantly supplied.

We are often told that this is already done; that there are no poor in this country save those who are either incompetent or indolent or vicious. If that could be proved, the ques-

tion would still remain whether the incompetency and the indolence and the viciousness may not, to a considerable degree, be the effects of causes for which society is responsible, and which, in a thoroughly Christianized society, would not be permitted to exist. But it cannot be proved that poverty is wholly the fault of the poor. The fact is that a very large number of those who are doing the world's work to-day are receiving less than their fair share of the wealth they produce.

It is true that there are many laborers who earn large wages. Compactly organized labor unions have been able to secure a favorable distribution of the product of their industry. But we are often reminded that but a small percentage of the laborers of this country are organized; and the wages of those thus unprotected are often lamentably small. Many attempts have been made to find out what is the average wage of the average workman; our census reports contain very carefully prepared statistics. I have taken pains to go over some of these, and here are the results.

In the textile trades, with 661,451 workers, the average weekly wage of all workers is

$6.07; of men over sixteen, $7.63; of women, $5.18; of children under sixteen, $2.15.

In the iron workers' trades, with 222,607 workers, the average weekly wage is $10.46.

In the boot and shoe trades, with 142,922 workers, the average for all is $7.96; for men over sixteen, $9.11; for women, $6.13; for children under sixteen, $3.40.

In the men's clothing trades, with 120,950 workers, the average for all is $7.06; for men, $10.90; for women, $4.88; for children, $2.61.

These weekly wages are obtained by dividing the annual wage by 52. Often the weekly rate is much higher, but for many weeks the workers are unemployed; the only fair estimate is that which is based upon the annual wage.

Have we any right to be content with conditions like these? Is the average wage of the average worker, as it is here indicated, all that he ought to ask? Should society wish him to be content with such an income? Sit down yourself and figure out just what it would mean to be obliged to maintain a family of four or five on such a stipend as is indicated in any of these trades — even those best paid. Find out how much should have to go for

rent, and how much for food, and how much for the plainest clothing, and how much for doctor's bills, and school books, and street-car fare, and how much would be left, after that, for books and church contributions and the wholesome pleasures which we ought to count among the necessaries of life. Life can be maintained on such an income, but is it the kind of life that we wish our fellow men to live? And is there any need that life, for the humble laborer, should be reduced in this rich land to its lowest terms? With the marvelous productiveness of fields and mines and forests and waters, with the immense development of machinery, by which the wealth of the nation is multiplied, might we not have an organization of industry and a method of distribution which would give to the army of manual toilers a much larger average income?

That is the question they are asking, and it calls for a candid answer. Their needs are not as dire as were those of the German peasants of the sixteenth century, but they are real and serious needs. Now, as then, a tremendous industrial revolution has dislocated industries and demoralized and impoverished many; now, as then, the concentration of capital in great

companies has destroyed small enterprises and left many who were once thrifty stranded and discouraged ; now, as then, glaring contrasts in condition excite the resentments of the needy; now, as then, the propertiless are wondering whether this is the kind of thing that the church has been looking for when she has prayed that the kingdom of God may come. And there is a feeling now, as there was then, among the millions of the toilers, that the church which assumes to represent Jesus Christ needs to be reformed, in order that through its testimony and its leadership the kingdom of God may come.

It is sadly true that there are many among these toiling millions who are embittered against the church, who have no faith in it, and no expectation that any good will come out of it ; but the great majority are not hostile to the church ; at worst they are indifferent, and this indifference is due to their belief that the church no longer represents Jesus Christ. Toward him there is often a pathetic outreaching of hope ; if the church would come back to the simplicity that is in Christ and would plant itself on the Sermon on the Mount, it would quickly win their loyalty. And I can-

not help feeling that now, as in the sixteenth century, there is in the minds of the toiling millions "a confused dream that the kingdom of God might be set up in the land," and that the time is ripe for it. Nor can I deem it possible that this great expectation of the multitude will now be disappointed. The church of this day must be able to see that this call of the poor and the humble is the call of its Master. It is with the weak and the needy that he is always identified; service of them is loyalty to him; neglect of them is scorn of him. It is his own word.

The coming reformation will be signalized by a great change in the attitude of the church toward the toiling classes. It will not turn its back on them, as it did in Luther's day; it will not maintain toward them an attitude of kindly patronage, as it has done in our day; it will recognize the fact that its welfare is bound up with them; that the barriers which separate them from its sympathies and fellowships must be broken down, at whatever cost; that it must make them believe that the church of Jesus Christ is their church; that it needs them quite as much as they need it; that it is a monstrous thing even to conceive that a

church of Jesus Christ could exist as a class institution, with the largest social class in the community outside of it.

The coming reformation will consist in the awakening of the church to its social responsibilities. It will see more clearly than it has ever yet seen, that those who pray that the kingdom of God may come, and who are responsible, as citizens of a republic are responsible, for the answering of that prayer, must see to it that justice and liberty and opportunity are established in the land. The church of Jesus Christ, with a passion that is born of loyalty to its Master, must set itself to the task of realizing, in the social order, the principles of his teaching. That was what the peasants of the sixteenth century called upon it to do; and for answer it turned and smote them to the earth. It will not repeat that blunder, which was nothing short of a crime. It hears the same call to-day, and when it obeys, as obey it must, it will save its own life and that of the nation with whose destiny it is put in trust.

VII

SOCIAL REDEMPTION

The New Reformation will be wrought out with weapons that are not carnal. One of the lessons that the church has learned, in the nineteen centuries of its history, is that it must keep itself free from all suspicion of entanglement with physical force.

That statement needs qualification. It is not universally true. The Greek church, as we have seen, is still fatally involved in political complications; the Roman church, while forced to abstain from the use of the temporal power, has maintained its right to use it; and other state churches, as those of England and Germany, retain some hold upon the political arm. But we are speaking of the church in our own country; and of the American church it is true that it has ceased to rely upon the power of the state. The entire divorce which our constitution decrees between the government of the church and the government of the state has become, with us, a settled policy, which we

do not wish to disturb. It is doubtful whether intelligent Roman Catholics in the United States would be willing to have this condition changed, and no other Christians would for one moment consent to it.

What the church does in the way of improving social conditions must, therefore, be done by purely moral and spiritual agencies. Society is not to be Christianized by any kind of coercion. The church cannot use force in any way, nor can it enter into any coalition with governments that rest on force. "It is not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord," that the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. It is as irrational to try to propagate Christianity by coercive measures of any description, as it would be to try to make plants grow by applying to them mechanical pressure.

Nor can the church undertake to dictate or prescribe the forms of industrial society. Its function is not the organization of industry. It would not wisely attempt to decide between different methods of managing business.

It would not, for example, be expedient for the church, at the present time, to take sides

in the controversy between collectivism and private enterprise. The Socialists declare that the wage system, based on private capital, tends to injustice and oppression; the advocates of the existing system contend that Socialism would destroy the foundations of thrift and welfare. The church cannot be the umpire in this contest, nor can it take sides with either party. Questions of economic method are beyond its province. Its concern is not with the machinery of society, but with the moral motive power. Or, it might be truer to say that it seeks to invigorate the moral life of men, and trusts that reinforced life to make its own economic forms. Its business is to fill men's minds with the truth as it is in Jesus, and to make them see that that truth applies to every human relation; and it ought to believe that when this truth is thus received and thus applied, it will solve all social problems. When employers and employed are all filled with the spirit of Christ, the wage system will not be a system of exploitation, but a means of social service.

Here is an employer of many hundreds of men, at the head of a very large business, which is rapidly increasing. This is not an

imaginary case. This employer is a man of flesh and blood, and he is in the very thick of the competitive mêlée; he is using the machinery of the wage system, but he is governing all his business by the principles of Christianity, and the business is thriving in a marvelous way. This does not mean that the manager is piling up money for himself, for he is not: he is living very frugally, and is adding nothing to his own accumulation; but the business is growing by leaps and bounds. The increasing profits, every year, are distributed in the form of stock among the laborers who do the work, and the customers who purchase the goods. The men who do the work are buying for themselves beautiful homes in the vicinity of the factory; in a few more years they will own a large part of the stock of the concern. This manager is not getting rich; but he has the satisfaction of seeing his business prospering in his hands; he is helping a great many men to find the ways of comfort and independence, and he insists that he has himself found the secret of a happy life. It is evident that if all employers were governed by the same motives, the wage system would be an instrument of

philanthropy. Whether this man is a church member or not does not appear, but he is certainly a Christian; he has learned the way of Jesus, and is walking in it. If the church could inspire all its members with this kind of social passion, all social questions would be solved. And this is the church's business — to inspire its members with this kind of social passion. Without this spirit in their hearts, no matter what the social machinery might be, the outcome would be envying and strife and endless unhappiness.

We have had the inside history of some of the many communistic enterprises that have come to grief, and all of them have been wrecked by the selfishness of their members, most of whom were seeking for soft places, and shirking their duties, — each trying to get as much as he could out of the commonwealth and to give in return for it as little service as possible. These contrasted cases show that the machinery of the wage system cannot prevent the exercise of brotherliness, and that the machinery of communism will not secure it. No kind of social machinery will produce happiness or welfare when selfish men are running it; and no kind of social

machinery will keep brotherly men from behaving brotherly.

We are often told by Socialists that the present régime of individual initiative and private capital tends to make men selfish and unbrotherly, while the tendency of Socialism would be to make men unselfish and fraternal. If the church were sure that this is the truth, she would be inclined to throw her influence on the side of Socialism. But, on the other hand, it is urged that Socialism tends to merge the individual in the mass, to destroy the virtues of self-respect and self-reliance, and to weaken the fibre of manhood. If the church were sure that this is true, she would be constrained to pause before committing herself to the socialistic programme.

She knows, in fact, that there is truth in both these contentions. That the individualistic régime has bred a fearful amount of heartlessness and rapacity is painfully evident; that such socialistic experiments as have been tried have weakened human virtue appears to be true. Under which régime the greater damage would be done is not yet quite clear. Therefore the church cannot commit herself to either of these methods. The best work

she can do, at the present time, is to inspire men with a love of justice and a spirit of service. She must rear up a generation of men who hate robbery in all its disguises; who are determined never to prosper at the expense of their neighbors, and who know how to find their highest pleasure in helping their fellow men. If the Christian morality means anything, it means all this. A church which represents Jesus Christ on the earth must set before herself no lower aim than this. And a generation of men whose hearts are on fire with this purpose may be trusted to fill the earth with righteousness and peace, whether they work with the machinery of the wage system or with the machinery of Socialism.

There are many good men, outside the church as well as within it, who believe that the existing social order can never be Christianized; that it must be replaced by a new social system. But most of us are still clinging to the belief that the existing social order can be Christianized, so that justice may be established in it, and good-will find expression through it. That it has been sadly perverted we all confess; we acknowledge with shame that it has become, in large measure, the in-

strument of injustice and oppression. But we believe that it may be reformed, so that it shall represent, in some fair degree, the kingdom of God.

The redemption of the social order is, then, the problem now before us. Can it be accomplished? President Roosevelt thinks that it can, and those who stand with him and support him assume that the existing competitive régime can be moralized and made to represent the interests of equity and fair dealing. If this can be done, nothing more is needed. If it cannot be done, the existing régime must make way for something better. The conviction that it can be done is finding expression just now in the vigorous efforts that are being made to amend and strengthen the laws which restrain plunderers and oppressors, so that opportunities may be equalized and the paths to success be kept open for men of all ranks and capacities. This is simple justice, and for this the church of God must stand with all the might of her influence.

That she has been derelict in the discharge of this duty must be confessed. If she had kept the charge committed to her, the inequalities and spoliations now burdening soci-

ety would not be in existence. For although it is not the business of the church to furnish to the world an economic programme, it is her business to see that no economic programme is permitted to exist under which injustice and oppression find shelter. The right to reprove and denounce all social arrangements by which the few prosper at the expense of the many is one of her chartered rights as the institute of prophecy. A church which fails to exercise this function is faithless to her primary obligation.

That the church has incurred heavy blame because of the feebleness of her testimony against such wrongs must now be confessed, and the least she can do to make amends for this infidelity is to speak now and henceforth, with commanding voice, against all the corporate wrongs that infest society. It may be that by her testimony the magistrates will be strengthened so to enforce the laws that aggressors shall be restrained, and freedom and opportunity secured to all; and that thus the existing industrial order may become, so far as law can make it, the servant of justice and good-will.

This is the first step toward social redemp-

tion. The reënthronement of justice is the primary obligation. John the Baptist must speak first. The conviction of social sin is the beginning of social righteousness. The church has a great work to do in awakening the public conscience to forms of injustice which are so involved and concealed that our attention is not fixed upon them. Professor Ross has just announced a volume with the title "Sin and Society." It is an illuminating word. The deadliest of the evils which are oppressing the community to-day come under this category. They are hidden from the public view. They assail you from ambush and you are helpless. The deadly missiles smite you on every side, but there is no revealing flash by which you can locate your foe. The social order is so complex that wrongs of this nature are easily perpetrated. Many of the transactions by which we are wont to profit are veiled injustices. They are of a nature so subtle and indirect that the law has not yet defined and forbidden them. Those who suffer these injustices are at a distance from us, and there is a network of legal and commercial relations between ourselves and them; we know that they will never confront us and call us to ac-

count; it is safe for us to do wrong, and we keep on doing it until our consciences are dulled, and we are not able to see that any wrong has been done.

The fact is, that such a complex social system as ours needs for its safe administration a kind of conscientiousness far higher and finer than that which men needed for honest living fifty years ago. Unless our minds are trained to see the right and wrong of very intricate transactions; unless our ethical imagination is sensitive enough to discern the nature of far-reaching and wide-spreading social relations, we shall constantly be profiting by the injury of our neighbors.

It is the business of the church to train the consciences of men for the moral problems that confront them, and this work has been but indifferently done. The first step in the redemption of the social order is the education of the Christian conscience to discern these smokeless sins. It is with evils of this character that the nation is now in a life and death grapple; the church ought to be able, by its testimony, to lend effective aid in this conflict.

The nature of the testimony needed may be indicated by a typical instance.

Not many years ago a very prosperous manufacturing company was doing business in a thriving American village, giving employment to fifteen hundred men and women, many of whom had purchased homes, in the expectation of having permanent occupation and livelihood. It was known to be a well-paying business; its stock, which was in few hands, was not in the market.

Suddenly a project of reorganization was announced, and stock amounting to five times the value of the property was placed upon the market. It was eagerly taken, for the reputation of the company was very high. With the proceeds of this sale of securities the managers made themselves very rich men. It was not necessary for them to do business any longer. Indeed, they could not have continued to pay dividends on the amount of stock which they had sold; they had never expected to do any such thing. What they did was promptly to close the business. The price of the stock dropped immediately to the neighborhood of zero, millions of values were canceled, and thousands of investors were made to suffer loss. But the direct consequences were seen in the village whose prosperity was suddenly

destroyed. Fifteen hundred men and women were deprived, at a stroke, of employment and livelihood. In many homes there was destitution and hunger; hundreds of men were compelled to seek employment elsewhere, sacrificing the homes whose value had been greatly reduced; businesses that depended on the patronage of the mill hands were ruined; churches were paralyzed; families were scattered; discouraged men fell into ways of dissipation; young women were led into the paths of shame.

All this was done under the forms of law, and yet it would be hard to find in the annals of crime an instance more flagitious. And the men who did this thing were church members — members in good standing, leading members of an evangelical church. Nor does it appear that they suffered any discredit in the church to which they belonged, and to whose revenues they continued to contribute out of the plunder by which they had impoverished and ruined so many. The church had not sufficient moral sense to reprove and denounce this iniquity. What is worse, the church had not had enough moral sense to make these men see beforehand that such an act was infamous.

Undoubtedly they would have promptly justified themselves. "Such transactions," they would have said, "are occurring every day; what the law does not forbid, and what everybody else does, cannot be wrong. The property was ours, and we had a right to put our own price on it, and sell it for what it would bring. The business was ours, and we had a right to do what we pleased with it, to keep it running or shut it down when we got ready: it is a free country: do you think you can compel a man to go on doing business when he prefers to quit? We never guaranteed permanent employment to these people: we paid them their wages while they worked for us, and that is the end of our obligation to them."

Some such answer they would, no doubt, have made to any one who called in question their conduct; and by such an answer they would have revealed the failure of the church to which they belonged to bring home to them their social obligations.

The existing social order can never be redeemed unless a fire can be kindled on the earth in whose clear shining light such deeds as these can be seen in all their deformity,

and in whose purifying flame such excuses as these will be utterly consumed. We must have laws to make such wrongs impossible; but behind the laws must be the moral insight and the social passion which shall make them effective, and it is the business of the church to furnish these. When this is done we shall have made a good beginning in the work of social redemption.

But it will be only a beginning. The work of John the Baptist comes first, but one mightier than he must follow. The voice of one crying in the wilderness is but the prelude of that larger revelation which is made upon the mountain top. To bring home to men the obligations of the law, and to show them wherein they are failing to obey it, is the first duty of the church in the present crisis; but it is the gospel with which she is primarily put in charge.

Clearer teaching about social morality is fundamental, but the great need, after all, is the vitalization of morality. The moral code, no matter how accurate may be its precepts, tends to become a dead letter, unless it is constantly revivified by the spirit of religion.

The Sermon on the Mount is often con-

ceived of as purely ethical teaching, but the heart of it all is religion. The revelation of the Fatherhood of God is the light which shines through all these words and furnishes the motive of all this morality. If we do the things here commanded, in the way that Jesus expects us to do them, it is because we know ourselves to be the children of our Father in heaven, living in his presence, rejoicing in the great love wherewith he has loved us, trusting in his care, seeking his kingdom, doing his will. The church which represents Jesus Christ in the world will never forget that its business is the leavening of society with the life of Christ; but neither can it forget that the life of Christ can only be maintained by constant communion with the Father. That the spiritual life of Jesus himself was thus maintained, the record makes clear. The central fact of his experience was his living union with the Father. We talk of "the practice of the presence of God;" Jesus was the only man who has ever perfectly realized it. And no one who knew him ever failed to see that it was the Father's kindness and compassion and grace and truth that were being manifested in his life. It was because he was filled

with all the fullness of God that he imparted to those who received him the spirit of goodwill, the passion for social service.

The church which represents him in the world will need, for its social service, the same inspiration. Unless its life is fed from this fountain, its stream will soon run dry. There are those who seem to think that sociology can solve all the problems of our modern life. If sociology be sufficiently expanded, this may be true; for a truly scientific sociology would have to explain how men came to be social beings, and what is the bond that unites them. If it finds that their relation to a common Father is the fundamental fact of their existence, then it would know that religion is at the heart of it, and that right relations with God are the spring and source of right relations with men. But a sociology which ignores this primary fact has in it no redemptive power.

The more earnestly, therefore, we contend that the business of the church is the Christianization of the social order, the more strenuously we must maintain that she is powerless to do this work except as her life is fed by faith and prayer. The redemption of the

social order is the greatest task she has undertaken, and she needs for it a strength that can only come from conscious fellowship with God. If she ever needed inspiration, she needs it now. If there ever was a time when she could dispense with the divine guidance and grace, that time is not now. The churches which desert the places of prayer, and think to substitute the wisdom of men for the power of God, are not going to give much aid in this struggle.

"It must be claimed," says one, "on behalf of the passion for God, that where it exists it will — automatically, as has been said — set charity, love, all sweet graces of philanthropic activity, into quick and ceaseless play. . . . If the emphasis of religious thought be made to fall upon the idea of life, this cannot fail to be; for to have the divine life is to be possessed of and to give out the divine love. . . . The regeneration of human society is found to come from the dominance of spiritual passion, even though it be not the first thing on which spiritual passion is set; the saint will be — just because he is a saint — a philanthropist too, since a true sainthood must number love among the graces of character

it brings. It is a fact — one has to make the sad admission — that religious people, professedly spiritual men and women, have been and still are in some cases eaten through and through by selfishness; these are those who, so that they can declare heaven to be their own, have no care for the present hell in which so many of their fellows spend their days and years. But that is not because they are too deeply immersed in the passion for God, — it is because they have not really immersed themselves in its flood. And in claiming for a Godward passion the regulative and supreme place among the elements of life, we do but secure a fuller tenancy among those elements of a manward love; for the nature which sets itself to receive the whole of God will, ere it knows it, and as an automatic effect of the new life it wins, give itself to its brethren in their need. For God is love, and he must dwell in love who dwells in God." [1]

We may hesitate to say that when the passion for God is the only thing aimed at it is bound to result in social regeneration; there are too many facts which prove the contrary.

[1] *The Philosophy of Religious Experience*, by Henry W. Clark, pp. 234–236.

The aim must always include both the Godward and the manward obligations; the first and the second great commandments are of equal rank; what needs to be insisted on is the impossibility of divorcing them.

The church which seeks the redemption of society cannot, then, dispense with its religion. Nothing has been made plainer, during the recent exposures of social decay, than the fact that our social morality must have a religious foundation. Even the man on the street is ready to concede that no righteousness is adequate for the present emergency but that which springs from faith in a righteous God. And nothing is more needed, at this hour, than the deepening of men's faith in the great religious verities.

It is often said that the only cure for existing social ills is a great revival of religion, and this is true. But the revival of religion which is needed is not the kind which the churches are most apt to seek. The religion which needs to be revived is not that which puts the sole emphasis on the safety and welfare of the individual, but that which equally exalts the social welfare; which identifies the interests of each with the interests

of all; which makes men see and feel that no salvation is worth anything to any man that does not put that man into Christian relations with his neighbors. Nothing but religion will do this for any man, and the religion which fails to do this is a spurious Christianity.

A great revival we shall see, one of these days, which will have this character. It will bind together the two great commandments of the law, and make men feel the weight of both of them. It will compel them to recognize the truth that, while the root of their religion is faith in God, the fruit of their religion is love for men. It will drive home the fact that the religion which does not hinder a man from being a boodler or a grafter; which permits a man to enjoy religion while fleecing his neighbors by crafty schemes of finance or artful legalized robberies; which allows the love of gain to triumph over truth and honor and brotherly kindness; which sits serene and complacent while social classes make war on each other, and children's lives are consumed by grinding toil, and women are forced by want into the ways of shame, and the enemies of society are set free to make gain by the

ruin of human souls, is a religion which is not worth having. It will insist that a religion which is rightly described as the life of God in the souls of men, would begin in the house of God itself, and kindle there a consuming flame before which such iniquities could not stand. Perhaps it would set men to saying — they might not feel like singing — Thomas Hughes's great hymn : —

"O God of truth, whose living word
Upholds whate'er hath breath,
Look down on thy creation, Lord,
Enslaved by sin and death.

"Set up thy standard, Lord, that we
Who claim a heavenly birth
May march with thee to smite the lies
That vex thy groaning earth.

"*We* fight for truth, *we* fight for God,
Poor slaves of lies and sin!
He who would fight for thee on earth
Must first be true within.

"Thou God of truth, for whom we long,
Thou who wilt hear our prayer,
Do thine own battle in our hearts,
And slay the falsehood there.

"Still smite! still burn! till naught is left
But God's own truth and love;
Then, Lord, as morning dew come down,
Rest on us from above.

"Yea, come! thus tried as in the fire,
From every lie set free,
Thy perfect truth shall dwell in us
And we shall live in thee."

It is hardly needful to say that the redemption of the social order will not be wrought out without sacrifice. "The redemption of the soul is costly," says the Psalmist. No man is rescued from moral degradation and death without suffering and sacrifice. Those who are saved are more often saved by the suffering of others in their behalf than by their own suffering. But the price of a soul is apt to be high, and love is sometimes able to pay it.

The redemption of society from the welter of selfishness and brutishness and cruelty into which it is now plunged will be a costly undertaking. The church is here, as Christ's representative, to take up this work; and it must not expect to accomplish it without suffering. "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord." If the church is Christ's servant, she must not expect to find any better way than his way of saving the world.

It is true, as we have seen, that the present deplorable conditions are due to the failure of

the church to enforce the Christian morality. The price that she must pay for the redemption of society is heavy because of her own neglect. But it must be paid. There is no other way of salvation.

Thus it appears that the church which bears the name of Jesus Christ has come to its testing time. It finds itself in the midst of a society whose tendencies are downward. Mammon is on the throne; the greed of gain is eating the heart out of commercial honor; reputations are crumbling; confidence is rudely shaken; the most cynical schemes for plundering the multitudes are daily brought to light; social classes stand over against each other distrustful and defiant; the house of mirth resounds with the mad revelry of the wasters, while the purlieus are noisome with poverty and vice.

Can this society be redeemed? Can this all-ruling commercialism be held in check, and this reign of plunder be overthrown, and all this seething selfishness and heartlessness and suspicion be made to give place to good-will and kindness, to trust and truth, to faith and honor? It will never be done without a vast expenditure of sacrificial love. "This kind

goeth not forth but by prayer and fasting." Is the church ready for this struggle? Is she willing to put forth the effort and pay the cost which is required for the redemption of society?

VIII

THE NEW EVANGELISM

Those who have followed these discussions from the beginning will not be inclined to hesitate in answering the question with which the last chapter closed. That society can be redeemed, and that the church can and will purge herself from the things that defile her beauty and corrupt her powers, and gird herself for the redemptive work assigned her, is the faith of every loyal Christian. The grievous failures of the church we cannot deny and must not palliate; it is of the utmost importance that she be brought face to face with them, and be made to see how far short she has come of her high calling. Such criticism she has received from the beginning. The seven churches of Asia were sharply called to account by the beloved disciple; their faithlessness and neglect were unflinchingly brought home to them. The churches at Ephesus and Sardis and Laodicea had as hard things said about them as have been said in these chapters of

the churches of this generation, and probably deserved them no less. We cannot doubt that that clear-eyed witness, if he were confronting the church of the twentieth century, would be constrained to say: "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. . . . Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eye-salve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I reprove and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent." In every generation such chastisement has been needed; the need is no greater to-day than in past generations, and the chastening love no less. What Lowell says of this country, many a Christian believer has been constrained to say of the church: —

> "I loved her old renown, her stainless fame;
> What better proof than that I loathed her shame."

But this keen sense of her shortcomings is

not inconsistent with an unfaltering faith in the recovery of her integrity and in her final triumph. And those who have read the history of the Christian church with sympathetic vision can hardly doubt that her brightest days are still before her.

For while it must be admitted that she has neglected, hitherto, her great work of social redemption, it cannot be said that she is more neglectful of it now than she has been in past years; the truth is that she is nearer to the recognition of it to-day than she has ever been. Derelict as she is to her primary obligation, it must yet be said that a consciousness of that dereliction is beginning to make her uneasy, and that has never before been true of any large portion of her membership. Since the earliest centuries the possibility of transforming the social order by purely spiritual influences has scarcely dawned upon her. So long as society was feudalistic or aristocratic, the problem seemed to be beyond her reach; she might hope to improve society, by inculcating kindness and charity, but hardly to reconstruct it upon new foundations.

The advent of democracy has brought home to her her social responsibilities. Here in

America, more than anywhere else, the nature of her social obligation has been revealed. Here the fact cannot be disguised that the people are the sovereigns, and that social as well as political relations are under their direct control. The sovereign people have pledged themselves one to another, in their constitution, to refrain from establishing, by law, any form of religion; but they have also covenanted together to promote the common welfare. This puts the responsibility for social conditions upon the whole people, and the Christian people are among them. They cannot avoid the obligation to apply Christian principles to social conditions. Power is theirs to be used in Christ's name and for the promotion of his kingdom. To see that society is furnished with right ruling ideas, and organized on Christian principles, is their main business. And while there are many by whom this obligation is still but feebly felt, yet there is a goodly number of those in whose minds the leaven is working, and to whom the nature of the kingdom that Jesus came to establish is being clearly revealed. That this number is destined to grow very rapidly we may reasonably hope.

The present situation is so clearly outlined by a recent writer that we may welcome a liberal quotation: —

"The first apostolate of Christianity was born from a deep fellow-feeling for social misery, and from the consciousness of a great historical opportunity. Jesus saw the peasantry of Galilee following him about with their poverty and their diseases, like shepherdless sheep that have been scattered and harried by beasts of prey, and his heart had compassion on them. He felt that the harvest was ripe but there were few to reap it. Past history had come to its culmination, but there were few who understood the situation and were prepared to cope with it. He bade his disciples to pray for laborers for the harvest, and then made them answer their own prayers by sending them out two by two to proclaim the kingdom of God. That was the beginning of the world-wide mission of Christianity.

"The situation is repeated on a vaster scale to-day. If Jesus stood to-day amid our modern life, with that outlook on the condition of all humanity which observation and travel and the press would spread before him, and with the same heart of humanity beating in him,

he would create a new apostolate to meet the new needs in a new harvest time of history.

"To any one who knows the sluggishness of humanity to good, the impregnable intrenchments of vested wrongs, and the long reaches of time needed from one milestone of progress to the next, the task of setting up a Christian social order in this modern world of ours seems like a fair and futile dream. Yet, in fact, it is not one tithe as hopeless as when Jesus set out to do it. When he told his disciples, 'Ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world,' he expressed the consciousness of a great historic mission to the whole of humanity. Yet it was a Nazarene carpenter speaking to a group of Nazarene peasants and fishermen. Under the circumstances at that time it was an utterance of the most daring faith, — faith in himself, faith in them, faith in what he was putting into them, faith in faith. Jesus failed and was crucified, first his body by his enemies and then his spirit by his friends; but that failure was such an amazing success that to-day it takes an effort on our part to realize that it required any faith on his part to inaugurate the kingdom of God and to send out his apostolate.

"To-day, as Jesus looks out upon humanity, his spirit must leap to see the souls responsive to his call. They are sown broadcast through humanity, legions of them. The harvest field is no longer deserted. All about us we hear the clang of the whetstone and the rush of the blades through the grain and the shout of the reapers. With all our faults and our slothfulness, we modern men in many ways are more on a level with the mind of Jesus than any generation that has gone before. If that first apostolate was able to remove mountains by faith, such an apostolate as Christ could now summon might change the face of the earth."[1]

The time is ripe for such an apostolate. The old type of evangelism has plainly had its day. Strenuous efforts are put forth to revive it, but their success is meagre. It is easy by expending much money in advertising, by organizing a great choir, and employing the services of gifted and earnest men, to draw large congregations; but the great mass of those who attend these services are church members, — the outside multitude is scarcely

[1] Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, pp. 414–416. The volume is one that no intelligent student of present-day Christianity can afford to neglect.

touched by them. Those who are gathered into the church in these meetings are mainly children from the Sunday schools. There may be evangelists who, by an extravagant and grotesque sensationalism, contrive to get the attention of the non-churchgoers, and who are able to report considerable additions to the churches; but the permanence of these gains is not yet shown, and we have no means of enumerating the thousands who, by such clownish exhibitions, are driven in disgust from the churches.

The failure of the modern evangelism is not conjectural: the year-books show it. The growth of membership in several of our leading denominations has either ceased or is greatly retarded; the Sunday schools and the young people's societies report decreasing numbers; the benevolent contributions are either waning, or increasing at a rate far less than that of the growth of wealth in the membership. It is idle to blink these conditions; we must face them and find out what they mean. This slackening and shrinkage is not a fact of long standing; it represents only the tendencies of the past twenty years.

We hear rather frantic demands for a return

to the old methods of evangelism, but that is a foolish cry : —

> "The mill will never grind
> With the water that is past."

The old appeal, which fixed attention upon the interest of the individual, has lost its power. It is not possible to stir the average human being of this generation, as the average human being of fifty years ago was stirred, by pictures of the terrors of hell and the felicities of heaven. These conceptions have far less influence over human lives than once they had, — less, doubtless, than they ought to have; for there are realities under these symbols which we cannot afford to ignore. But the fundamental defect of that old appeal was the emphasis which it placed upon self-interest. "Look out for yourself!" was its constant admonition. "Think of the perils that threaten, of the blisses that invite! Do not risk the pain; do not miss the blessedness!" To-day this does not seem a wholly worthy motive. At any rate, it is below the highest. Men feel that the religion of Christ has a larger meaning than this. A presentation of the gospel which makes the welfare of the individual central does not grip the conscience and

arouse the emotions as once it did. For the conception of human welfare as social rather than individual has become common; that "great fund of altruistic feeling," which, as Mr. Benjamin Kidd tells us, is the motive power of all our social reforms, is constantly stirring in human hearts; and although there are few whose lives are wholly ruled by this motive, there are fewer still who do not recognize it as the commanding motive; and a religious appeal which is based upon considerations essentially egoistic does not, therefore, awaken any large response in human hearts.

If the church wishes to regain her hold upon the people, she must learn to speak to the highest that is in them. A man's religion must consecrate his ideals. A religion which invites him to live on a lower plane than the highest on which his thought travels cannot win his respect. And therefore the new evangelism must learn to find its motive not in self-love, no matter how refined, but in the love that identifies the self with the neighbor. It must bring home to the individual the truth which he already dimly knows, that his personal redemption is bound up with the redemption of the society to which he belongs; that he can-

not be saved except as he becomes a savior of others; nay, that the one central sin from which he needs to be saved is indifference to the welfare of others, and a willingness to prosper at their expense.

The time has come for the church to take an entirely new attitude in offering men the gospel. It has been too well content with pressing the personal advantages of religion, with trying to lure them into discipleship with baits addressed to their selfishness. It has been inventing attractions of all sorts, — fine buildings, sumptuous upholstery and decorations, artistic music, brilliant oratory ; it has thought it possible to enlist men by pleasing their tastes and gratifying their sensibilities. So far has this gone that the average churchgoer consciously justifies his presence in church or his absence from it on the ground of pleasure. If it pleases him enough, he goes; if not, he reads the Sunday paper or goes out with his automobile. It is a simple question of enjoyment.

The response of those invited shows the nature of the invitation. It indicates that the church has been putting a great deal of emphasis on the attractions which it has to offer.

We can hardly imagine such replies to be made by those who were invited to listen to the preaching of Jesus or his apostles. They did not suppose that it was a question of entertainment that they were considering. They knew that it was a summons to service and sacrifice. That, beyond all doubt, was the nature of the appeal of the church in those earliest centuries, when it was marching over Asia and Europe, conquering and to conquer. It was not baiting men with soft cushions and pictured windows, with coddlings and comfits; it was calling them to hardship and warfare, to ignominy and ostracism; the words of the Master to which it gave emphasis were not mere metaphors: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

The call of the cross has never failed. The power of God and the wisdom of God are in it. And it is time for the church to take up this heroic note and sound it forth with new power. This is the new evangelism for which the world is waiting. It is not a call to be "carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease;" it is not an invitation to the sentimental soul to "sit and sing herself away to ever-

lasting bliss;" it is the clarion of battle; it is the challenge to an enterprise which means struggle and suffering and self-denial.

The redemption of society is the objective of the new evangelism. How vast an undertaking this is was indicated in the last chapter. Let us look at it a little more in detail. How much does it signify, here and now, in the United States of America?

It means, first, the reconciliation of races. One thing that must be done is to take this chaotic mass of dissimilar, discordant, suspicious, antipathetic racial elements and blend them into unity and brotherhood. The first Christians had a task of this nature on their hands; they had to bring together in one fellowship Jews and Gentiles. But that was a pastime compared with the herculean labor intrusted to us, — the bringing together of whites and blacks, of Caucasians and Mongolians, of scores of groups divided by the barriers of language, of religion, of custom, and fusing them into one nationality. No task of the same dimensions was ever undertaken by any people; but this is ours, and we must perform it. It is the task of the nation; but the church of Jesus Christ is charged with the

business of furnishing the sentiments and ideas by which alone it may be accomplished.

It means, secondly, the pacification of industry. The contending hosts of capital and labor must be brought together, and constrained to cease from their warfare and become friends and coöperators. It is absurd to suppose that the war of the industrial classes can continue to be waged, as at present, each seeking to overpower the other. Such a condition of things is simply irrational. All warfare is illogical and unnatural. Human beings are not made to live together on any such terms. They are made to be friends and helpers of one another. The elimination of war is the next step in industrial evolution. And it is the business of the church of Jesus Christ to speak the reconciling word. She has the word to speak, and when she utters it with authority it will be heard.

It means, thirdly, the moralization of business. The trouble with business is simply covetousness. The insatiable greed of gain is the source of all the dishonesties, the oppressions, the spoliations, the trickeries, the frauds, the adulterations, the cutthroat competitions, the financial piracies, the swindling schemes,

— all the abuses and mischiefs which infest the world of commerce and finance. Against all these forms of evil the church must bear her testimony; but the root from which they all grow is the love of money, and it is this central and seminal sin of modern civilization that the church must assail with all the weapons of the spiritual warfare. "Covetousness is idolatry" — so St. Paul testifies; and a grosser or more debasing idolatry has never appeared on earth than the worship of material gain. Unless the bonds of that superstition can be broken, the race must sink into degradation. It is the one deadly enemy of mankind. And the church of Jesus Christ is called to lead in the battle with this foe. Against no other social evil was the testimony of Jesus so trenchant and uncompromising. Nothing more clearly evinces his unerring vision of moral realities than his judgment upon this encroaching passion. In his day it was an evil almost negligible compared with what it is to-day. It was because he foresaw the conditions which prevail to-day that his words were so hot against the rule of Mammon. The church is face to face with the danger which he discerned, and she must

meet it in his spirit and with the energy of his passion. To make men see the hatefulness and loathsomeness of this greed of gain is the first duty of the church. When that is accomplished the worst evils of the business realm will disappear.

It means, fourthly, the extirpation of social vice. When covetousness is conquered, the procuring cause of much of this kind of evil will be cut up by the roots. The greed of gain is the motive which breeds and propagates social vice. But there are animal propensities to which these incitements make their appeal; and some way must be found of quickening the nobler affections, so that the spirit shall rule the flesh and not be in bondage to it. To fill the thoughts and wishes of men with something better worth while than the joys of animalism is the radical remedy for these degradations. And the church ought to be able to supply this remedy.

The redemption of society means, in the fifth place, the purification of politics. The dethronement of Mammon will go a long way toward this also; most of the corruptions of our political life spring from the love of money. Graft is the first-born of covetous-

ness. But the love of power also plays a part in the debauchery of citizenship; and the central sin of using men as means to our ends is exhibited here on a stupendous scale. This is the vocation of the boss and the briber and the political machinist; and a deadlier way of destroying manhood it would be hard to find. It is not only the interest of other individuals, but the interest of the whole community that the corrupt politician sacrifices upon the altar of cupidity or ambition; and when a man has learned to turn the one great privilege of service and sacrifice which citizenship offers into an opportunity of private gain, he has sunk about as low as man can go. What more urgent task has the church upon her hands than that of making men see the treachery and infamy of this kind of conduct? And unless men can be made to see it and feel it, what hope is there for free government? Can anybody imagine that democracy can long endure if the ruling motive of the citizen in his relation to the commonwealth is a purpose to get as much out of it as he can and give it as little as he can? All political reforms which leave the citizen in this state of mind are futile. There is no salvation for a democracy which

does not change the direction of the motive in the heart of the individual citizen. And this is the business of the church. Without this, social redemption is impossible, and there is no other agency which even proposes to accomplish this.

And, finally, the redemption of society means the simplification of life. Here, perhaps, we strike more nearly than anywhere else at the heart of the whole problem. The bottom trouble of the world in which we live is the enormous over-multiplication of our wants. In the multitude of ministrations to our senses, the life of the spirit is overlaid and smothered. Jesus said that a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses; it is this elementary truth which the world has ceased to believe. For the most part our life is in our things; our happiness depends on them; our desires do not often rise above them.

The complexity, the artificiality, the profusion of our belongings absorbs the larger part of our interest. The energies of invention are mainly directed to the creation of new wants. As the resources of the earth are developed, life takes on an accumulating burden of cares

and conventions and superfluities. We read, with a wonder which is a thinly disguised admiration, the stories of the extravagances of the people of the whirlpool, but most of us are jogging along after them, wishing that we could get into the swim ourselves. Our houses are cluttered with adornments; our social functions are spending matches; our feasts invite to satiation; our funerals are exhibitions of extravagance. This thing has been growing by leaps and bounds, and the time has come when we are fairly swamped by the abundance of the things which we possess. Nay, it can hardly be said that we possess this abundance; it possesses us: —

> "Things are in the saddle
> And ride mankind."

In recent years the cry has been rising for a simpler life. It is a voice in the wilderness; in the din and clatter of our complex civilization it seems faint and far off, but it is making itself heard; it begins to be evident to all thoughtful people that we must somehow manage to get away from these entanglements of sense and live a freer life. In these artificialities and extravagances the soul is enfeebled and belittled, and the national vigor

is lost. If we want to save our nation from decay we must learn to live a simpler life. And this change will not be wrought out by evolutionary processes; it means revolution rather; not by violence, we may trust, but certainly by choice, by effort, by struggle and resistance we shall turn back these tides of materialism, and lead the current of our national life into safer channels.

We are not going to strip our lives bare of beauty, or to consign ourselves to the meagreness of the anchoretic regimen; we shall have beautiful homes and abundant pleasures; but we must learn to make our spiritual interests supreme, and not suffer our thought to be blurred and our faith enfeebled and our love stifled in the atmosphere of modern materialism.

Such, then, are some of the phases of that great work of social redemption which now confronts us. Other aspects of the work, not less serious, might be presented, but these are some of the outstanding needs of modern society. Certainly it is a tremendous work. To reconcile hostile and suspicious races; to pacify industrial classes; to moralize business; to extirpate social vice; to purify politics;

to simplify life; — all this is an enterprise so vast that we may well be appalled by the thought of undertaking it. But this, and nothing less than this, is the business which the church has in hand. For which of these tasks is she not responsible? From which of them would she dare ask to be excused? To what other agency can she think of intrusting any of them? Nay, this is her proper and peculiar work. For this is she sent into the world.

In truth, the one thing that the church needs to-day is to envisage this task, — to take in its tremendous dimensions; to comprehend the overpowering magnitude of the work that is expected of her. It is this revelation that will rouse her. Never before, in all her history, has such a disclosure of her responsibility been made to her. And the enormity of the obligation will set her thinking. It will dawn upon her after a little, that it is for just such tasks that she is called and commissioned; that the achievement of the impossible is the very thing that she is always expected to do; that the strength on which she leans is omnipotence; that she can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth her. She will see

and understand that her progress is not made by seeking the line of least resistance: some such worldly wisdom as this has been her undoing. She will learn that it is only when she undertakes the greatest things that she finds her resources equal to her needs.

This is the heroic note of the new evangelism. The work of making a better world of this is a tremendous work, but it can be done. It can be done, because it is commanded. If there is a God in heaven, what ought to be done can be done. To doubt that is to deny him. And there is one way of doing it, and that is Christ's way. For all this manifold, herculean labor on which we have been looking, there is no wisdom comparable with his. He said that he came to save the world, and he is going to save it. He has waited long, but he knows how to wait. The day of his triumph is drawing near. This world is going to be redeemed. This social order, so full of strife and confusion, of cruelty and oppression, of misery and sorrow, is going to be transformed, and the love of Christ shed abroad in the hearts of men will transform it. We are not going to wait another thousand years for our millennium; we are going to

have it here and now. This is the gospel of the new evangelism which it has taken the church a long time to learn, but which she is now getting ready to proclaim with demonstration of the spirit and with power.

We must not hide from ourselves the fact that some great changes will need to take place in her own life before she can give effect to this great evangel. She must heal her divisions, and fling away her encumbering traditions, and greatly deepen her faith in her Lord and Leader. Above all, she must simplify her own life. She cannot bear witness, as she must, against the deadly influences of our modern materialism, until she utterly clears herself of all complicity with it. This means, in many quarters, a radical change in her administration.

When the church has thus envisaged her task, and comprehended its magnitude, and when, with her heart on fire with the greatness and glory of it, she has laid aside every weight and the sins that so easily beset her, and has girded herself with the truth as it is in Jesus, and has set the silver trumpet to her lips, she will have a gospel to proclaim, to which the world will listen.

It will tell the world, as it has always told the world, of forgiveness and hope, of comfort and peace, of the help and guidance that comes to the troubled soul in believing in Jesus. It will speak, as it has always spoken, of the rest that remaineth, and of the great joys and companionships of the eternal future. But it will have something more than this to tell.

The kingdoms of this world — this will be its message — are becoming the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. It is not an event to be awaited, but to be realized, here and now. Nothing is needed but that men should believe the word of Jesus Christ and live by it. We do believe it, and we mean to show our faith by our works. We believe that by simply living together as Jesus has taught us to live, we can make this world so much better than it now is, that men shall think heaven has come down to earth. We believe that the race question and the labor question and the trust question and the liquor question and the graft question and all the other questions will find a speedy solution when men have learned to walk in the way of Jesus. And we call you to come and walk with us in that way.

It is not a smooth and thornless way. It is a toilsome and painful way. It is the way of the cross. It means hardship and struggle and suffering. Such intrenched and ingrained iniquities as now infest our society will not be overcome without conflict. We are not calling you to a pastime. We are not offering you riches or honors or sensual joys. We are calling you to service and to sacrifice. But we are going to build here in this world the kingdom of heaven. We know that it can be done: we know how to do it, and the glorious thing we have to tell you is that you can have a share in it. Look forward with us to the day when —

> "Nation with nation, land with land,
> Unarmed shall live as comrades free,
> In every heart and brain shall throb
> The pulse of one fraternity;
>
> "New arts shall bloom, of loftier mould,
> And mightier music thrill the skies,
> And every life shall be a song
> When all the earth is paradise," —

and come and help us to bring that glad time. The Leader whom we follow knows the way, and the future belongs to Him.

That is the message of the new evangel-

ism, and when the church learns to speak it with conviction, and to make it good in her life, she will find that the gospel has a power that she has never even imagined it to possess.

IX

THE NEW LEADERSHIP

THESE discussions have failed of their purpose if they have not made a few things clear. Let us restate them: —

1. The roots of religion are in human nature. It is a fact as central and all-pervasive in the social realm as gravitation is in the physical realm. It is no more likely to become antiquated or obsolete than oxygen or sunshine. It is an interest which no intelligent person can afford to ignore.

2. Like every other living thing, religion grows. It is not outside the sphere of operation of Him who said, "Behold! I make all things new!" It is subject, continually, to his wise economy of renewal.

3. Our religion is Christianity. With the other religions of the race it is destined to be brought into closer and closer comparison and competition, and that religion will survive and become universal which most perfectly explains the universe and provides for

the wants of the human soul. All the indications are that the religion which survives will include the essential elements of Christianity.

4. All religions are rooted in the social nature of man, but Christianity, more than any other, is a social religion. It depends for its culture and propagation upon the social forces. Some form of social organization, like the church, is necessary to the life of religion. Worship, to be sane and salutary, must be social; and the life of Christianity can find expression only in such coöperations as those for which the church provides.

5. As the life of religion is nurtured in social worship and service, so its fruit is gathered in the transformation of society. The primary function of the church is the Christianization of the social order. The business of the church is to save the world by establishing here the kingdom of heaven.

6. The church has very imperfectly performed this function. It has but dimly discerned and but feebly grasped the social aims of Jesus. It has tried to do a great many other things, some of them good things; but the one thing it was sent to do it has largely left undone.

7. A new reformation is therefore called for, and that reformation must accomplish what the reformation of the sixteenth century failed to accomplish, — the restoration of the social teachings of Jesus to their proper rank and dignity. As the reformation of the sixteenth century brought the individual to Christ as a personal Saviour, so the reformation of the twentieth century must bring society to Christ as a social Saviour, and must make men see that there is no way of living together but his way.

8. The church is therefore called to the redemption of society. But the work of redemption to which it is called is not a reconstruction of economic or political machinery; it is the quickening of the social conscience, and the reënthronement of justice and love in the place of selfishness and strife as the ruling principles of human society.

9. For the redemption of society a new evangelism is needed. The new evangelism will not emphasize the interest of the individual; it will rather emphasize the truth that the individual can only be saved when he identifies his own welfare with the welfare of his fellow men. And it will not try to win men

by offering them ease and safety and comfort, but rather by showing them how tremendous are the tasks before them; what a mighty work there is to do in delivering this world from the bondage of corruption and selfishness; what hardship and toil and sacrifice are needed; but how sure the victory is for those who are able to believe the word of Jesus Christ and follow, whole-heartedly, his leadership.

Such are the characters and conditions under which the church of Jesus Christ presents herself in this new day to modern men. Her record is far from flawless; it is the necessities of logic, not the facts of history, which make her infallible. She has blundered along through the centuries, missing much of the work she was sent to do, and staining her garments not seldom with the soilure of greed and the blood of the innocent; but through all these generations the patient love of her Lord has been chastening her, and through many wanderings and stumblings she has come down to this hour. The light upon her candlestick has often grown dim, but it has never been wholly extinguished; the fire upon her altars has burned low, but it is still burning. She has not done all that she ought

to have done, but she has done a large part of all that has been done to enlighten, to comfort, and to uplift humanity. And the discipline through which she has passed gives some indication of the work she has yet to do. It is not credible that a wise Providence should have kept her alive so many centuries, and should have made so much use of her in the establishment upon the earth of the kingdom of heaven, and should have led her into a constantly increasing knowledge of Himself, if he had not meant to make her his servant in the great work now waiting to be done.

Her hour has come, and her task lies before her. It might be urged that she ought to have been better fitted for her work before she was called to undertake it; but that is not God's way. We get our preparation for great work in the work itself. We are called from the sheepfolds to lead the armies of Israel. We are sent out with a few loaves and fishes to feed the multitude. Our powers are developed and our resources are multiplied by using them. And though the church is far from having the equipment she needs for the redemption of society, the power and the wisdom will come when the work is bravely undertaken.

To whom, now, does this great enterprise of social redemption make its strongest appeal? It ought to appeal to all good men and women. It ought to enlist the powers of those who are in the meridian of their strength. The men whose vision has been widened and whose wills have been invigorated in the great undertakings of industry and commerce ought to find in this proposition something worthy of their powers. It ought, also, to stir the hearts of those who have labored hard and waited long for the coming of the kingdom to hear a great voice saying, "Now is the accepted time: behold! now is the day of salvation!" To many of those who have not much longer to live life never seemed a thing so fair as it is to-day.

But this great appeal ought most strongly to lay hold upon the hearts of the young men and women of this generation. The enterprise is mainly theirs. If the new reformation comes, they will lead it on. If society is redeemed, it will be by their toil and sacrifice. If the church ever learns its business, it will be under their tuition. And it must be by their voices, chiefly, that the new evangel will be proclaimed.

The young men and women who have had the patience to read these chapters have been invited to consider some large and serious themes. It has been assumed that they did not care for kindergarten talk, nor even for the ethical platitudes to which youth are apt to be treated. There has been no talking down to them; they have been asked to sit where Jesus sat, among the doctors in the temple, to hear and answer questions, and to consider, with the rest of us, our Father's business.

All this tremendous work of social reconstruction about which we are talking must be done, and most of it must be done by them. It is to be hoped that they will be able to see the urgency of it, and to feel that it is something worth their while.

Those of us who have been permitted to come in contact with the more thoughtful young men and women of this generation, especially those in the colleges and the professional schools, have been made aware of a deepening conviction among the best of them that the kind of prizes for which the multitude are contending are not of the highest value. Great revisions have been taking place, during the past few years, in the estimates of success.

Many careers which, but a little while ago, seemed enviable, now appear much less alluring. And while this change of attitude is far from being universal, there is a goodly number of young men and women scattered through all our communities whose souls are kindled with social passion, and who are asking not so eagerly how they may succeed as how they may serve. To these we have a right to look for leadership in the work of social redemption.

Many phases of this work will appeal to them. In education, in philanthropy, in journalism, in literature, in art, they will be called to serve; many philanthropies will invite them; the organization of industry upon coöperative lines will offer some of them a vocation, and the government will be upon their shoulders.

But what they are asked to consider here is the claim of the church upon them. That claim need not conflict with any of these other vocations, unless, indeed, the work of the Christian ministry should offer itself to their choice. That possibility, by the way, is well worth thinking of. Some of them, let us trust, will keep it in mind for further consideration. If the business of the church is what

we have found it to be, and the new evangelism is such as we have outlined, the Christian ministry must offer to any man whose heart is on fire with social passion a great opportunity. But for the present let us note the fact that upon those who are not to give their whole lives to the work of the church, the church has a claim, which they ought seriously to consider. Whatever their callings may be, in whatever fields they may be laboring, the church will need their loyal service, and they will need its goodly fellowships and its inspiring coöperation.

The church which ought to be, and must be, is not for some of us, but for all of us. Even as the state is the political commonwealth to which all citizens belong, so the church is the spiritual commonwealth in which all souls should be included. The interests for which the church provides are the common human interests; it never can be what it ought to be, or do what it is called to do, until it gathers all the people into its fellowship. And therefore these young men and women to whom the future is intrusted must find their places in the church. The church needs them; it cannot fulfill its function without them; and

we have seen that its function is a vital function; that it furnishes the bond by which society is held together.

The church is God's agency for leavening society with Christian influences; and these young men and women by whom the social order is to be reconstructed will be in the church. Its leadership will be committed to them. They will have the shaping of its life. Its life will need much reshaping, and that will be their work. What will they make of it?

1. They will make it, what it has always been, a place of worship; the shrine of the spirit; the home of Christian nurture; a school of instruction; a fount of inspiration; a seminary of religion; the meeting-place of man and God.

Attempts have been made in recent years to organize churches — or, at least, associations which should take the place of churches — in which religion should be dispensed with; in which there should be more or less of ethical instruction and of charitable coöperation, but no recognition of any connection between this world and any other. That is simply a reform against nature, and it will never pros-

per. For, as Professor William James has taught us, in a great inductive study, the sum of all that is known about religion warrants us in saying: —

"(*a*) That the visible world is part of a more spiritual universe, from which it draws its chief significance;

"(*b*) That union or harmonious relation with that higher universe is our true end;

"(*c*) That prayer or inner communion with the spirit thereof . . . is a process wherein work is really done, and spiritual energy flows in and produces effects, psychological or material, within the phenomenal world." [1]

These are the indubitable conclusions of modern science; and the proposition to ignore the deepest fact of human experience will not be entertained by the young men and women of the present day. The church, under their leadership, will be a worshiping church, a praying church. It will keep itself in close relations with that unseen universe from which its help must come. It will be a channel through which the divine grace will flow into the lives of men. And it will also be, what it has always been, a school as well as a shrine, a place where the

[1] *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 485.

teacher searches out and unfolds the truth and the prophet proclaims the message that has been given him.

2. Under its new leadership the church will continue to be a minister to human want and suffering. The charitable work which has always been emphasized in its administration will not be neglected, but it will take on a new character. There will be less almsgiving, and more of the kind of help which saves manhood and womanhood. The young men and women who are called to this leadership will understand the worth of souls — that is, of men and women; and they will be careful lest, in their relief of want, they undermine the character. Above all, they will feel that while it is the business of the church to care for the poor, its first business is to cure the conditions which breed poverty.

3. They will thoroughly democratize the life of the church, making it the rallying place of a genuine Christian fraternity, in which men of all ranks and stations meet on a common level, ignoring the distinctions of rich and poor, cultured and ignorant, and emphasizing the fact of Christian brotherhood. We have churches which profess democracy, but there

is reason to fear that many of them are little better than oligarchies; that some of them come near to being monarchies. The new leadership will discern the importance of making every member of the brotherhood, no matter how humble, a partaker of its responsibilities, and a helper in its services. They will know that the problem of church administration is to make every man feel that he is needed. They will grasp the significance of Paul's figure of the body and its members, and will see that "those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary," and that "those parts of the body which are less honorable" ought to receive "more abundant honor." They will have workingmen in their vestries and their sessions and their boards of trustees. They will show to all the world that they have accepted the word of Jesus: "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

4. This means that the life of the church will not only be thoroughly democratized, but greatly simplified. All its administration will take on plainer and less luxurious forms. The splendors of architecture and art, of upholstery and decoration, of ecclesiastical millinery

and music, with which we now so often seek to attract men to the house of God, will be put aside; and the followers of Jesus Christ will get near enough to him to have some sense of the fitness of things in the ordering of the houses of worship where the Carpenter is the social leader and where rich and poor meet as one brotherhood.

Instead, therefore, of permitting the church to be invaded and vulgarized by the luxury and extravagance of the world, they will turn the current in the other direction. The church, under the new leadership, will not take its cue from the world; it will enforce its own standards upon the world. "Out of Zion will go forth the law."

Bitter words were those spoken at a recent meeting of the Congregational Union in England by one of the greatest of English preachers.[1] "The common life of the home," he said, "is often a mere vulgar exhibition of the means of living. We try to persuade ourselves that showy living is essential life. In tens of thousands of English homes the mere show of things is the goal of a restless and feverish ambition. Everywhere we seem to be loitering

[1] Dr. J. H. Jowett.

and pottering about in the implement yard. Even in our universities we must have showy buildings, though we starve the chairs. All this peril becomes the more insidious when we pass into the realm of the church of God. Why, the 'means of grace' are often misinterpreted as grace itself. We are obtruding our badges and ribbons, our soldier's dress without the soldier's spirit, our music, our ministers even, — how they look, what they wear, what they do — they are all part of the wretched vulgarity of the modern spirit."

The two things are rightly put together. The ostentation of the home, the tawdry luxury and profusion of fashionable society, creep into the church and set up their standards there, and the religion of Christ puts on a costume in which its Founder would never recognize it.

We are dealing here with the very heart of the trouble in our national life, and the problem is one which must be solved by the present generation of our young men and women. The social conditions which are depicted for us by close students of the life of our luxurious classes are ominous in the extreme. The cynical dishonesties and the brutal spoliations which have come to light in the realm of high

finance and big business are the natural fruit of such a manner of life as many of our recent novelists have vividly portrayed. And the wanton extravagance of the House of Mirth would not exist if the majority of the people did not admire it. The outcry against it is oftener the voice of envy than of moral revulsion. The cure for this evil, as of most others, is found in public opinion; and the church must educate public opinion to reprove it, and the leadership of the church will be in the hands of the young men and women of this generation.

It will be evident to them that the place to begin is in the church itself. The heartless luxury of the world will not be chastened into simplicity by a church that surrounds itself with splendor and spends money lavishly upon its pleasures. They will know that a church which wishes to reprove the vanity and ostentation of the outside world must order its own life in such a way that its word shall be with power.

5. Finally and chiefly the young men and women who are to be called to the leadership of the church will feel that their main business is the work of church extension. But they will

give to this phrase a little different meaning from that which it has generally carried. The church extension to which the boards and societies in the church have been devoted is the work of building new churches in promising fields. It is properly denominational extension. Something of this kind will remain to be done in the new day now before us, and our new leaders will doubtless have some part in it. But the church extension which is most loudly called for just now is the extension of the life of the church into every department of human life. It is more analogous to what we call university extension work. The business of university extension is not the planting of new universities; it is the projection of the university into the community; it is the attempt to carry the light and the knowledge and the truth and the beauty for which the university stands down among the people; to popularize the higher culture and the finer art. That is a most praiseworthy enterprise, a most Christian undertaking. And something very much like this will be the church extension for which the new leadership will stand. Its aim will be to make a vital connection between the Christian church and every institu-

tion or agency by which the work of the world is done, so that the influence of the church shall be directly felt in every part of our social life. It will consider the church as the nursery or conservatory, whose growths are to be planted out all over the field of the world. It will make the church the central dynamo of the community, connected by a live wire with every home, school, factory, bank, shop, store, office, legislative chamber, employers' association, labor federation, — with every organ of the whole social organism, so that the light and power which are in Jesus Christ shall be the guiding influence and the motive force of our civilization.

This is the work which remains to be done, and for which this present world is loudly calling. It is the work that Jesus Christ came into this world to do, and he will not see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied until it is done. The opportunity of realizing the social aims of Jesus, of organizing society upon the principles which he laid down, is offered to the young men and women of this generation. It will be open to them so to order the life of the church that in its democracy and its simplicity it shall represent Jesus Christ,

and then to extend this life into industry and commerce and politics and art and social diversion, thus bringing all the kingdoms of this world into the kingdom of the Christ. It will be their principal task to translate the sermons and the prayers and the songs of Sunday into the life of the shop and the factory and the office on Monday and the other days of the week. That would mean, of course, a tremendous overturning in the business of the world; a radical revision of the ideals and standards of the great majority; a new point of view and a new aim in life for the most of us. But such a peaceful revolution in our ways of life would be far less painful and disastrous than the revolution which our present habits are sure to bring, and it is the only thing which will prevent it. And if the young men and women of to-day will but discern this truth, they may have the honor of leading in the new Saturnian reign.

We hear in these days from earnest men many anxious questions why the message of the gospel fails to reach and convince the outside multitude. "Why is it," good preachers say, "that there are so many people in all our communities — some of them very good

people — who are not at all touched by our appeal? They do not seem to be interested in what we have to offer them. They do not appear to feel their need of it."

To this question more than one answer could be given, but there is one answer which needs to be well considered. One reason is that these men and women fail to discern, in the life round about them, the reality of the thing which we offer them. For Christianity is, as we have seen in these studies, not only an individual experience, but a social fact. And while we might not be qualified to judge whether the individual experience, in any given case, is genuine, we could see the social fact, if it were in sight. That social fact would be profoundly interesting to us, and it would be convincing. Nothing else is likely to convince us. In truth, we cannot understand Christianity at all until we see it in operation in society. One man alone cannot give any idea of what it is. As some one has said, one man and God will give us all that is essential in any other religion, but Christianity requires for its operation at least two men and God. In fact, it takes a good many men and women and children, living together in all sorts of re-

lations, to give any adequate exhibition of it. What we need, then, first of all, to convince men of its reality, is a good sample of it, in active operation — a great variety of good samples, indeed. When we have these to show, we can get people interested.

It would be difficult, if a very homely illustration may be permitted, to enlist the interest of any boy in baseball if you made it with him an individual matter. You might try to train him for any given position on the field, but if he undertook to study it out alone it would not be easy for him to understand it. In fact, it would be impossible. No one could learn the game all alone. The team work is the whole of it. And it would be absurd to expect any one to become interested in the game unless he could see it played.

To take a similar illustration from a somewhat higher form of art, you would not be likely to succeed in awakening enthusiasm in any one for orchestral music by giving him his individual part of the score to study and play over by himself. No matter what his instrument might be, the solitary performance of the part assigned to it would be the dryest possible business. You could not convert any

man to the love of orchestral music by any such process. But if he could hear all the instruments played together, and, better still, if he could play in with all the rest, that might be inspiring.

So you need not expect to convert any man to Christianity unless you can show him Christianity at work in human society. In considering only the individual application of it, its whole meaning and significance would be hidden from him. The team work is all there is of it. Let him see it in active operation, and it will awaken his enthusiasm.

This is, in fact, the essence of the new evangelism to which the young men and women of this day are called. Their business will be to take Christianity out into the field of the world and set it at work. It is for this that the leadership is intrusted to them. The church has been a long time coming to this, but it seems at last to be arriving, and the young people of this generation will be summoned to the great undertaking. Surely they may feel that a high honor and a heavy responsibility are thus put upon them. It is the most heroic enterprise to which the sons of men have ever been called.

Not all of them will respond to the call. But we may hope that there will be found among them a goodly minority to whom the appeal will come with commanding voice, and whom we may hear answering: "Yea and amen! The work is ours, and we will not shirk it. It is work worth doing, and it can be done. To make a better world of this is the best thing a man can think of; and we believe that Christ's way is the right way. It has never yet had a fair trial, and we are bound that it shall be tried. We know that we shall not make ourselves rich or famous in this undertaking; but we shall see the load lifted from many shoulders, and the light of hope shining in many eyes; we shall hear the din of strife changing to the songs of cheerful labor; we shall share our simple joys with those who know that we have always tried to make their lives happier, and who cannot choose but love us; we shall find life worth living, and we shall die content."

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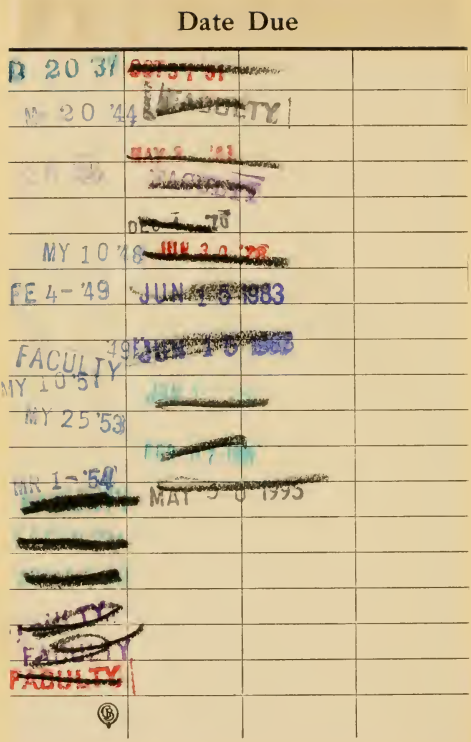
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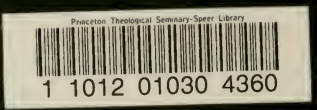
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